

# BODY BRAVE - NUTRITION TIPS

# Structured Eating

What is structured eating? Also known as scheduled eating, mechanical eating, refeeding, or nutrition rehabilitation, the goal of structured eating is to establish regular eating patterns. This may involve a meal plan, but not always. Structured eating purposely overrides hunger and fullness cues, recognizing that these cues are often skewed when struggling with disordered eating, an eating disorder, or chronic dieting. Structured eating helps your body regain trust that it will be fed regularly, and adequately, so that in time, you can return to using your hunger & fullness cues, and eventually work towards eating intuitively. Structure helps reduce restriction which in turn helps reduce the frequency of disordered behaviours such as a binge.

## Guideline of Threes

Structured eating might involve the following:

### 3 meals a day

Aim for 3 larger eating moments in a day. For some, this might look like breakfast, lunch, and supper.

### 2-3 snacks a day

Add in 2-3 smaller eating moments between larger eating moments.

### 3 or more food groups at meals

Our main food groups include: fruit & vegetables, dairy/alternatives, meat/alternatives, grains & starches. Two other equally important food groups include: fats & spreads, and desserts/sweets.

### No more than 3 hours apart

The human body functions best when fed regularly, about every 3 hours. Consider the timing of when you eat.

For anyone feeling confident about the Guideline of Threes, **consider variety and aim not to repeat a meal or snack more than 3 times a week.** Challenge yourself by introducing new foods. This can help reduce a repetitive eating pattern and help ensure nutritional balance.



### It's like wearing a cast

Structured eating is meant to be temporary, like wearing a cast on a broken arm. It provides the necessary support and framework for the healing to take place. In time, the cast comes off, but you still need to be gentle with yourself as you learn how to be flexible and listen to your body.



### Tips for getting started

- Pick one aspect of the Guideline of Threes to work on at a time.
- Decide on times for your eating moments. Use alarms as reminders.
- Plan out what you are going to eat. This might look like a detailed meal plan, or simply a list of go-to options.
- Monitor your success.
- Be gentle with yourself. If you miss an eating opportunity or have a binge, your efforts towards structure have not gone to waste. Try again, and consider revising your eating goals to better meet yourself where you are at.
- Seek support from a registered health care provider, such as a dietitian.

*Remember: Food has no morality*

**There are no good and bad foods. The nutritional content of food, and whether or not you eat a particular food, is not a moral issue.**

