

Principle 2: Honor Your Hunger

“Keep your body biologically fed with adequate energy and carbohydrates. Otherwise, you can trigger a primal drive to eat beyond comfortable fullness. Once you reach the moment of excessive hunger, all intentions of moderate, conscious eating are fleeting and irrelevant. Learning to honor this first biological signal of hunger sets the stage for rebuilding trust with yourself and food”.

(Tribole and Resch, 2025)



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“Dieting Can’t Transcend Biology”

“Dieting is a form of short-term starvation. Consequently, when you are given the first opportunity to really eat, eating is often experienced at such intensity that it feels uncontrollable, a desperate act. In the moment of biological hunger, all intentions to stick with a food plan are fleeting and paradoxically irrelevant” (Tribole and Resch, 2020).



Minnesota starvation study

- During World War II
- Food deprivation/ starvation study by Dr. Ancel Keys
- Designed to help famine sufferers
- Subjects were 32 "healthy men"
- During first 3 months, they ate as they pleased
- The next 6 months was "semi-starvation period" (calories nearly cut in half)

Summarized from *Intuitive Eating*, fourth edition. Tribole and Resch, 2020.



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Minnesota starvation study

Talked obsessively about
food.

Heightened food
cravings.

Eating style changed.

Loss of "willpower".

"Flagrantly broke the
dietary rules".

Exercised to
obtain increased food
rations.

Personalities changed.

Summarized from *Intuitive Eating*, fourth edition. Tribole and Resch, 2020.



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Minnesota starvation study findings- refeeding period ("allowed to eat at will")

Hunger pangs more intense.

Hunger was insatiable.

Irrational fear that food
would not be available.

Difficult to stop eating.

Took an average of five
months to normalize
their eating.

Summarized from *Intuitive Eating*, fourth edition. Tribole and Resch, 2020.



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Hunger sensations or symptoms:

Mild gurgling or gnawing in
the stomach

Growling noises
(stomach)

Lightheadedness

Difficulty concentrating

Uncomfortable stomach
pain

Irritability

Feeling faint

Headache

Summarized from *Intuitive Eating*, fourth edition. Tribole and Resch, 2020



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Hunger and Fullness Sensations Assessment

	Rating	Description of Hunger and Fullness Sensations	Overall Quality of Sensation		
			Pleasant	Unpleasant	Neutral
Over Hungry	0	Painfully hungry. This is primal hunger, which is very intense and urgent.		X	
	1	Ravenous and irritable. Anxious to eat.		X	
	2	Very hungry. Looking forward to a hearty meal or snack.	X		
Normal Eating Range	3	Hungry and ready to eat, but without urgency. It's a polite hunger.	X		
	4	Subtly hungry, slightly empty.			X
	5	Neutral. Neither hungry nor full.			X
	6	Beginning to feel emerging fullness.			X
	7	Comfortable fullness. You feel satisfied and content.	X		
Over Full	8	A little too full. This doesn't feel pleasant, but it has not quite emerged into an unpleasant experience.			X
	9	Very full, too full. You feel uncomfortable, as if you need to unbutton your pants (or skirt) or remove your belt.		X	
	10	Painfully full, stuffed. You may feel nauseous.		X	

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