

Self-Monitoring

The first thing I would like you to do is to take a step back and observe, identify, and understand your eating behaviour. And the best way to achieve this is via self-monitoring. Self-monitoring simply means recording your thoughts, feelings, and behaviours towards food and eating in real-time or as they occur.

Completing daily records of your eating patterns may provide you with important information about your disordered eating / critical self-talk Jamie. In essence, it allows you to become a detective, searching for clues about any problem eating behaviour you might regularly encounter. This helps address our present behaviours.

With monitoring, you might eventually find out that, for example, you only emotionally eat when you've skipped lunch, or when you've had an argument with your spouse, or maybe when you've broken one of your strict food rules, or maybe when you're feeling bored.

So, **by recording your thoughts, feelings, and behaviours, it becomes easier to be aware of the specific and harmful patterns that maintain your emotional eating.** And once you become aware of what is going on, you will find it much easier to change, because you will know what needs changing.

You can do this in any format you wish, even just blank page journaling is super helpful however if you need a little bit more guidance and structure, I have found the below extremely useful with my previous clients. In the past clients have also used voice recordings and even video diaries too! It is a good idea to have one form per day so that you can record your relevant behaviours, thoughts, and emotions. This is what you should be recording:

- **Time:** the exact time you ate or drank anything.
- **Food & drink consumed:** what it was that you ate or drank during that period of time. Be descriptive and don't leave anything out.
- **Place:** where you were when you consumed this. Was it your bedroom? Kitchen? Friends place?
- **Excessive:** did you perceive this episode of eating to be excessive or too much?
- **Hunger level:** on a scale of 0 (starving) to 10 (stuffed), rate how hungry you were before you started eating.
- **My reflection:** anything relevant to note before, during, or after this episode of eating. This may include your emotions or thoughts related to eating or anything that may have contributed to your eating.

Self-Monitoring Worksheet Example

Time	Food	Place	Excessive	My hunger (0-10)	My Refection
9am	Black coffee with apple	Kitchen	No	3	Not hungry because it's pretty early. In a bit of a rush for work. Will wait till later in the day to eat
2pm	Light salad with diet coke	Office	No	6	Little bit hungry but thought I would delay my eating because I know I'm having pasta for dinner. Pasta is calorie dense, so I don't want to overeat today!
7pm	2 bowls of pasta with 5 slices of garlic bread	Kitchen Table	Yes	10	Absolutely starving! But I ate too much and now I feel sick. So bloated. Struggled to stop eating - I couldn't tell that I was full during the time! Feeling so guilty about this. Highly concerned about putting weight on.

Self-monitoring Worksheet- Blank

Self-Monitoring Form is an excellent strategy designed to help you overcome binge eating, because it helps you both understand and identify the triggers and experiences of binge eating. It will essentially help you understand the proactive changes you can make to fight back against these episodes.

Date:

Time	Food	Place	Was it excessive? (in terms of portion)	My hunger (0-10)	My Refection

I'd personally recommend having a journal / jotter that you can physically write in as this is a more powerful tool and helps to reinforce any learning achieved from doing this practice.