






Session 6: Take Charge of What's Around You

The first step to a healthier lifestyle is to look closely at your day-to-day routines. To take charge, learn the “cues” (or “triggers”) for how you eat and how you move.

What “cues” you (or makes you want) to eat?

- Hunger
- What you're thinking or feeling
- What other people say and do
- Sight and smell of food
- Certain activities that make you think about food, like watching TV or reading magazines

Examples:

“Cue”	Makes You Want to Eat This
You see a carton of ice cream.	Ice cream 
You turn on the TV. 	Potato chips
You go to the movies.	Popcorn 

When you respond to a food cue in the same way, over and over again, you build a habit.

How can you change problem food cues and habits?

1. **Stay away from the cue.** Or keep it out of sight.
2. **Build a new, healthier habit.**
 - Practice responding to the cue in a healthier way.
 - Add a new cue that helps you lead a healthier life.

Keep in mind: It **takes time** to break an old habit and build a new one.



Common Problem Food Cues

At home

- Living room: TV, computer, phone, candy dishes
- Kitchen: Ready-to-eat foods (ice cream, chips, cookies), preparing food, putting away leftovers
- Dining room: Serving dishes on table, large dinner plates, long amount of time spent at the table

Away from home

- Commuting: Bakeries, coffee shops, fast food drive-thru windows
- Public areas: High-calorie foods and beverages (doughnuts, pastries, candy) in cafeteria, vending machines
- Workplaces: Candy and snack foods always in view

My problem food cues: _____

Tips

- **Keep problem foods out of your house and work place.** Or keep them out of sight. Out of sight is out of mind.
- **Keep healthy choices easy to reach, in sight, and ready to eat.** Examples: Fresh fruits, raw vegetables (already washed and prepared), water, and other calorie-free drinks.
- **Limit your eating to one place (or fewer places).**
- **Limit other activities when you are eating.**

Shopping Tips

- Become an expert on where you shop (name those places):

- Plan meals and make a shopping list ahead of time. *Stick to the list.*
- Don't go shopping when you're hungry.
- Avoid sections in the store that are a problem for you.
- Buying in bulk can help your budget but be sure to have a plan for portion control.
- Ask the store manager to order healthy food you want.
- Don't let coupons tempt you to buy junk food.



Common Activity Cues

Now look at your cues for moving and sitting.

1. Add positive activity cues to your life.

- Keep these in sight:
 - Equipment such as shoes, bag, mat, bike
 - Self-monitoring record, exercise calendar
 - Exercise video
 - Motivational photos, posters, magazines
- Set up a regular "activity date" with a friend or family member.
- Set a timer or alarm on your watch or other device to remind you to be active.
- My positive activity cues: _____

2. Decrease your cues for being inactive.

- **Limit TV watching.** Or be active while you watch TV.
- Limit any form of screen time (such as videos, games, shopping, and social media).
- Limit "over scheduling". Having too much on your calendar makes it hard to find time to be active.
- My cues for being inactive: _____



3. Learn to use feelings of being low on energy or stressed as cues for being active.

- Try building a new habit. Go for a walk instead of watching TV when feeling stressed, bored, or sluggish.



To Do:

Check the boxes when you complete each item:

- Keep track of your weight.** Weigh yourself at home at least once a week. Record it.
- Record everything you eat and drink every day.** Come as close as you can to your calorie and fat gram goals.

New Things to Practice:

Make food and activity cues work **for** you, not against you.

- Get rid of one problem food cue.**

What problem food cue will you get rid of? _____

What will you need to do to get rid of it?

What problems might you have? What will you do to solve them?

- Add one positive cue for being more active.**

What activity cue will you add? _____

What will you need to do to add it?

What problems might you have? What will you do to solve them?

- Be active for _____ minutes this week.** Record what you do.

- The suggested activity goal for last week was **90 minutes**.
- If you reached **90 minutes**, try adding 30 minutes this week.
- If you were active for less than **90 minutes**, that's okay. Start at your current activity level and try adding 30 minutes more.
- If you are doing more, great work and keep it up.

Look for blocks of time when you could be active. Have these blocks of time last for 10 minutes or more. Plan activities you LIKE to do.

	What You Will Do	When	Minutes
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			
Total minutes for the week (My goal: ___ minutes)			

Make active choices throughout the day. Name some of the ways you increased your spontaneous activity.

Before the next session, answer these questions:

- Were you able to change any food or activity cues?

___Yes ___No ___Almost

- What problems did you have?

- What could you do differently?
