

How to Overcome an Urge to Binge by Activating Your Neocortex

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Urges to binge come in the form of overwhelming desires to eat large amounts of food in a short period of time. They are characterized by a sense of loss of control, excessive food consumption, and often followed by disappointment and shame.

One doesn't have to have a binge eating disorder or any eating disorder, per se, to be exposed to such urges.

Many people who've gone through a period of restrictive dieting experience at least one strong urge to binge. These powerful compulsions aren't easy to resist. That's why many of us, at some point in our diet, end up reaching for forbidden foods in larger amounts than what's reasonable.

This is how we pave our road to ruin and give way to the well-known yo-yo effect.

As food consumption is an integral part of our daily lives, we don't have the luxury to stay away from it, like in the case of cigarettes, alcohol, drugs or other addictive substances and behaviors.

It's clear that food can't be eliminated from our lives, but our thinking and acting around food can, indeed, be managed and optimized.

How can we rise above our durable desire to indulge in food that doesn't serve us well in the long-term? What can support us in staying faithful to our initial intention for healthy nutrition?

How can we make food choices that we won't regret later?

The Neocortex

The answer is already within you. To be more precise, it is located in the most recently developed region of your human brain called the neocortex.

This part of your brain, especially the prefrontal section, is responsible for:

- Planning and moderating complex behavior (including social behavior)
- Goal setting
- Expression of your personality
- Decision making

Your true self resides in this part of your brain. This is the self that doesn't quickly lose control when exposed to animalistic desires such as an urge to binge.

Using Your Neocortex to Resist an Urge to Binge

How can we call on our neocortex when we want to make conscious food choices?

Follow these steps:

- 1. Consider your urge to be irrational.** Before you take this step, ensure that you are consuming enough food. If you're restricting your nourishment and starving yourself, then your urge to eat is a legit physiological need that should be met.
 - If you're eating enough and still have desires to indulge in fattening foods, consider that desire as *brain junk*. This act will lift you up to the level of your true-self.
- 2. Divert your attention. What you focus on tends to grow.** If you find yourself

trying to fight your obsessive thoughts, they will only increase in strength and occupy even more of your precious mindspace. What works better is to shift your focus to something more productive, self-care for example.

- Once you allow yourself to engage in a pleasant or meaningful activity, your neocortex will get engaged, and **the grip of your urge will lessen until it leaves you entirely.**

3. Reach out to others. Food can often be used for comfort. Many of us choose to deal with our emotional turmoil by indulging in short-lived pleasures provided by sugary, fattening treats. To keep this from happening, reach out to family, friends, or even strangers. **Experience comfort from human connection.**

- In doing so, you're activating the part of your neocortex that regulates social behavior. Once you rise to this level of consciousness, your cravings will crumble down, letting you carry on with your day.

These tips are designed for those who have a relatively healthy relationship with food and experience occasional urges to binge. If you suffer from an eating disorder, you'll find your best results in consulting professional support and recovery assistance.

This is an excerpt from the book, *Fitness Facts: Get Fit and Lose Weight*. See the full book on Amazon at the link below OR type the following link into your browser.

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