

Intuitive Eating Starter Guide

RECLAIMING FOOD FREEDOM
IN PERIMENOPAUSE



WELCOME, BEAUTIFUL HUMAN

You're not broken. You're not failing.
You're transitioning—and your body is asking to be heard.

Perimenopause can shake up everything you thought you knew—about food, hunger, energy, even you.

This guide is your safe space to reconnect. It's all about listening, compassion, and learning to trust again—no restriction, no judgment.



WHAT IS INTUITIVE EATING?

Intuitive Eating is an evidence-based, non-diet philosophy developed by Evelyn Tribole and Elyse Resch in 1995.



It helps you:

- Listen to your hunger and fullness signals
- Enjoy food without guilt
- Heal your relationship with your body

Particularly in perimenopause, when hormones shift unpredictably, intuitive eating helps you reconnect with your body's natural wisdom—so you can eat from a place of presence and peace.

*"Your body isn't broken—it's speaking.
Intuitive eating is how you start listening again,
with compassion, curiosity, and the deep trust
that your body knows the way."*

is Intuitive Eating for You?

If you're feeling worn out by years of dieting, food rules, or constantly second-guessing what your body really needs—intuitive eating might be exactly what your soul's been craving. It's especially powerful during perimenopause, when your hunger cues, energy, and body shape may all feel unfamiliar.

This approach is for women who are ready to let go of restriction and guilt, and instead want to eat in a way that feels nourishing, sane, and truly aligned with how their body is changing.

If you're looking for freedom, satisfaction, and self-trust at the table, intuitive eating can be a beautiful homecoming.

Who Intuitive Eating May Not Be For —At Least Right Now

Let's be honest: intuitive eating is a beautiful practice, but it's not the right first step for everyone. If you're actively dealing with an eating disorder—or recovering from one—jumping straight into “eat what you want, when you want” can feel destabilizing.

You may need more support, structure, and healing before intuitive eating truly serves you. Same goes if you struggle to feel hunger or fullness cues due to trauma, neurodivergence, or a long history of restrictive eating.

That doesn't mean this path isn't for you eventually—it just means we need to build the bridge there with care, and that's okay. You're not behind. You're being thoughtful.

HOW TO PRACTICE INTUITIVE EATING DURING PERIMENOPAUSE

Perimenopause is like adolescence in reverse—your hormones are fluctuating, your body is changing, and you might not recognize your cravings, moods, or energy patterns anymore. It's frustrating, yes. But it can also be liberating.

This is where intuitive eating comes in. Think of it not as another plan to follow, but as a way to come home to yourself. It's about rebuilding trust with your body—learning to respond to its whispers before they become screams.

Here's how to begin tuning in, one simple step at a time.

1. Get Curious About Hunger and Fullness

Perimenopause can dull or intensify your hunger cues—thanks to shifting levels of estrogen, cortisol, and even ghrelin (your hunger hormone). Instead of trying to control hunger, listen to it.

Ask yourself:

- Am I physically hungry, or am I emotionally triggered?
- What does my body feel like when it's comfortably full?
- Do certain foods leave me energized or drained?

Start by rating your hunger and fullness before and after meals on a scale from 1 to 10.

Not to be rigid—but to get reacquainted with what your body is actually telling you.

2. Ditch Food Rules and Labels

Perimenopause often brings renewed pressure to “clean up your diet”—which often translates to restriction. But the truth is, labeling foods as "good" or "bad" often leads to guilt, rebellion, and binge-restrict cycles.

Instead, aim for a nutrition-informed approach to intuitive eating. Ask: How does this food nourish me? That might mean fiber-rich greens one moment and a slice of dark chocolate another.

Both can be part of a healthy, hormone-supportive relationship with food.

3. Prioritize Blood Sugar Balance

This is big during perimenopause. As estrogen declines, your insulin sensitivity can drop too—which means blood sugar spikes and crashes become more common (and more intense). That “hangry” feeling? It’s real.

To stay balanced:

- Build meals with protein, healthy fats, and fiber—especially at breakfast.
- Avoid skipping meals (which can spike cortisol).
- If you’re craving sweets, try pairing them with fat or protein (like a piece of dark chocolate with almonds).

This isn’t about rules—it’s about feeling steady, grounded, and less at the mercy of sugar swings.

*In the quiet moments, your body speaks.
Listen.*

4. Address Emotional Eating with Compassion

Emotional eating is not a failure—it's a coping mechanism. And in perimenopause, when mood swings, anxiety, and sleep issues spike, it's understandable that food becomes a source of comfort.

Instead of shaming yourself, get curious. What am I really hungry for? Connection? Rest? A break?

Then experiment with “adding in” other tools—like a walk outside, journaling, deep breathing, or calling a friend—alongside food, not instead of it.

5. Practice Body Respect, Even If You Don't Love Your Body Today

Perimenopause often brings body changes that can feel disorienting—belly weight gain, shifting skin, bloating. It's okay to grieve those changes. But also, ask: What does it mean to take care of my body today, even if I don't feel at home in it?

That might mean eating regularly, moving in ways that feel good, or simply not speaking to yourself with the voice of a critic.

6. Stay Mindful—but Flexible

Mindful eating means paying attention—but not obsessing. Slow down, chew your food, notice flavors and textures. Enjoy the pleasure of eating. But don't get stuck trying to do it perfectly—that's just another version of control.

Remember: hormones fluctuate day to day, so your needs will too. Give yourself permission to be flexible. Some days you'll want hearty meals; other days, lighter fare. Both are valid.

7. Seek Support When You Need It

If food feels like a battleground—or if you're navigating health conditions like diabetes, high blood pressure, or a history of disordered eating—don't go it alone.

A registered dietitian who understands intuitive eating and women's hormonal health can be an invaluable ally. So can a therapist, functional medicine provider, or menopause-literate OB-GYN.



Intuitive eating isn't a quick fix.

It's a relationship—a way of reconnecting with your body after decades of being told to distrust it. And in the flux of perimenopause, that reconnection can be one of the most powerful gifts you give yourself.

Your body has wisdom. Your cravings are clues. Your hunger is not the enemy—it's information.

And you, my friend, are worthy of care, nourishment, and respect, exactly as you are today.

5-STEP INTUITIVE EATING JUMPSTART



Say Goodbye to Diet Rules

List the food rules you've followed (e.g., "carbs after dark are off-limits," "never skip breakfast"). Ask yourself: "Does this truly serve me?"

Mantra: My body is not a math problem.



Honor Your Hunger

Rate your hunger on a scale from 1 to 10 each meal. Aim to eat around 3–4—before you're starving. Filling up when you're calmer helps you choose nourishing foods and stop before you're stuffed.



Reintroduce Joy

Choose a "fear food" (like pasta, cookies, or cheese). Eat it mindfully—savor every bite. Notice if you truly enjoy it, feel satiated, or crave more.

Practice: Once a week, without guilt.



Use the 3-Bite Journal

Track your meals without counting calories. After the first three bites, jot down:

- What they were (food + texture).
- What you noticed (taste, temperature, satisfaction).
- Hunger/fullness before vs. after.
- Mood or emotion present.

This builds awareness—your internal GPS for eating.



Build a Stress Toolkit

When emotions prompt eating, you deserve gentle support too.

Try these five non-food tools:

- A short walk
- 3–5 minutes of breathwork
- Journaling (even bullet points!)
- Calling a supportive friend
- A grounding meditation (e.g., Insight Timer app)

Food will still be part of comfort—but it doesn't have to be your only go-to.

*The more you trust your body,
the more it will trust you back.*



SNACK KIT ESSENTIALS

Keep this ready-to-go kit stocked and accessible:

Item	✓ Packed?	Notes
Apple + nut butter	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Whole-grain crackers + hummus	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Trail mix + dark chocolate	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Low-sugar protein bar	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Cheese stick or boiled egg	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Tip: Pack this each morning—set yourself up for gentle nourishment.



YOUR WEEKLY TRACKER

Day	Pre-Hunger (1-10)	Post-Hunger (1-10)	Paused Mid-Meal? (Yes/No)	Emotions Noted
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				
Saturday				
Sunday				

Note: "Paused Mid-Meal?" means you checked in with fullness before continuing.

AFFIRMATIONS TO SHIFT YOUR MINDSET

Repeat aloud daily—or add them to your sheets:

Body Wisdom & Trust

- My body knows what it needs, and I trust its signals.
- I honor my hunger and respect my fullness.
- My appetite may change day to day, and that's perfectly normal.
- I listen to my body with curiosity, not judgment.
- My body deserves nourishment at every stage of life.

Food Relationship & Freedom

- I give myself permission to eat foods that bring me joy and satisfaction.
- No food is inherently good or bad—food is simply fuel and pleasure.
- I release guilt and shame around my food choices.
- I eat without apology or explanation to others.
- My worth is not determined by what I eat or don't eat.

Self-Compassion & Acceptance

- I treat myself with the same kindness I would show a dear friend.
- My changing body deserves love and respect at every size.
- I am learning to nourish myself, and that's a lifelong practice.
- It's okay to eat for comfort sometimes—I am human.
- I forgive myself for past food-related stress and move forward with grace.

Midlife & Change

- My nutritional needs may be different now, and I adapt with flexibility.
- I embrace this season of life and nourish myself accordingly.
- My metabolism may be changing, but my body is still worthy of care.
- I honor my energy levels and eat in ways that support how I feel.
- My relationship with food can evolve as I do.

Mindful Eating & Presence

- I eat with awareness and gratitude for the nourishment before me.
- I create peaceful eating experiences for myself.
- I taste, smell, and truly enjoy my food.
- I eat at my own pace, without rushing or distraction.
- Each meal is an opportunity to care for myself with intention and love.



WHAT'S NEXT?

Continue using this guide for 2–4 weeks.

Journal daily—curiously, gently.

Explore more free resources [here](#).



A LOVING REMINDER

Perimenopause can feel like a chapter of uncertainty—like you're shedding old versions of yourself without knowing what comes next. But it's also a powerful invitation: to reconnect with your body, nourish it more deeply, and show up for yourself in a whole new way.

Intuitive eating isn't just about what's on your plate. It's about honoring the body that has walked you through every season of life. It's about deep respect, daily kindness, and believing—truly believing—that you are worthy of nourishment, pleasure, and peace.

Be gentle. Be patient. Celebrate every win.

You don't have to eat perfectly. You just have to keep choosing you.

Disclaimer:

This guide is educational only and not a substitute for medical advice. Consult your healthcare provider before making changes, as your journey is uniquely yours.

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menopausenetwork.org

e: support@menopausenetwork.org

