

your mind

WEEK 2: Challenge Week

How to beat your cravings and stay on track

UNDERSTANDING HUNGER AND HAVING THE POWER TO SAY NO

IF CRAVINGS FOR CHOCOLATE FUDGE cake let you down on a diet, you're not alone. Addiction counsellor and author of *Eating Less: Say Goodbye to Overeating* (Vermillion, £7.99) Gillian Riley, says cravings are the biggest challenge dieters face. Whilst most advice is based on avoiding the craving, Gillian believes that instead of trying to ignore them, you should face up to them, especially as the more a craving is satisfied, the more it's reinforced.

'During a craving, your mind goes into a complete trance and just takes over,' says Gillian. 'You need to face up to the desire head on. If you're tempted to buy a chocolate bar, confront the craving in the shop. Realise your options: one choice is to buy it and overeat, the other is to just leave it. Think about the consequences of both choices – that way, you'll be in control of whatever decision you make.'

ACCEPT YOURSELF

If you're struggling to beat temptation, Gillian says you need to start thinking differently. She adds, 'If you're tempted by

some biscuits being passed around the office, ask yourself whether you'll be happy with yourself if you give in. But also accept the fact that sometimes you will give in to temptation – after all, you're not perfect.'

IS IT HUNGER?

Sometimes it's difficult to tell physical hunger and a craving apart. 'If you've just had a meal and still want to eat, tell yourself it's not real hunger,' says Gillian. 'Real hunger comes on slowly, whereas addictive hunger comes on much more quickly and is usually triggered by emotions and other circumstances. If it's real hunger, you should eat. If you're not sure and find yourself tempted to snack, choose a nutritious food, like an apple.' To avoid overeating, Gillian advises working out in your mind how much you plan to eat before you start. 'When you've finished what you've decided to eat, any more is a craving,' she explains. 'It's all about changing your eating patterns, but luckily our body and minds soon get used to new changes.'

What to do if you CAN'T SAY NO

Having the willpower to say no to cravings all the time can seem like hard work and you're bound to want to give in occasionally. Here are some things to remember when you just can't resist

1 YOU HAVEN'T 'BLOWN' YOUR DIET

Having a muffin (or three) doesn't mean all your hard work is ruined. You need to eat 3,500 calories to put on even a pound, so put the blip behind you and move on.

2 EVERYONE OVERINDULGES SOMETIMES

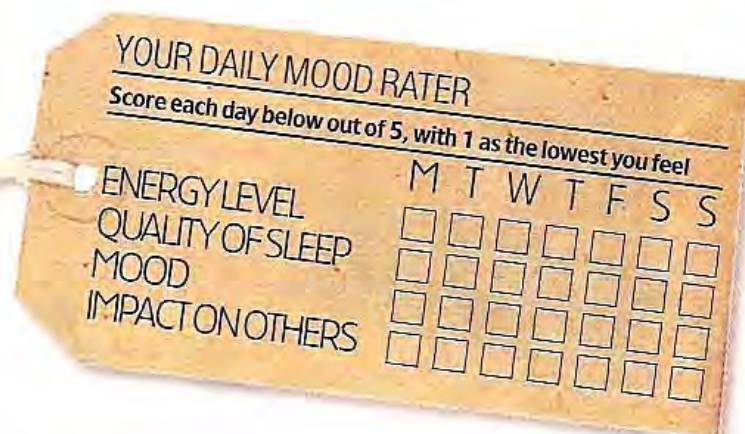
It can be impossible to avoid the birthday cake on offer in the office without feeling like a complete diet bore. Accept special occasions as a normal part of life and try to incorporate the food and drink on offer into your eating plan if you can.

3 GIVING IN CAN HELP YOU SLIM

No matter how strong your willpower, there'll always be times when only chocolate will do. Sometimes it's better just to satisfy the craving straight away, rather than plough through mounds of nuts, only to give in to the lure of the Twix later anyway.

4 EVEN THIN PEOPLE HAVE BLOW-OUTS

The difference is, they don't beat themselves up about it afterwards. Follow their example and stop feeling guilty about food – it's these guilty feelings that can lead to more bingeing.



FOCUS ON THIS

'When I've lost my weight I'm going to buy a gorgeous new dress'

