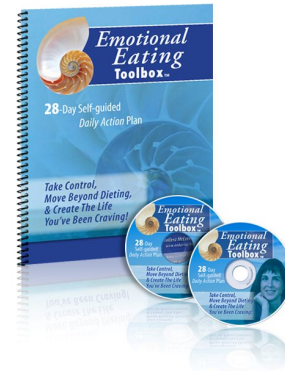


## Ten Strategies for Avoiding Emotional Eating

If you struggle with emotional eating, you know how powerful a bad mood or a difficult time can be. How many times have you started a weight loss plan or a fresh new day of healthy eating, only to feel completely derailed by an unexpected bad day, an awful experience or strong emotions—hurt, anger, disappointment, even boredom—that seemed to magnetically pull you to the refrigerator? It's one thing to recognize emotional eating or the fact that it's about to happen. It's another thing entirely to be able to identify some things to do INSTEAD.



**Here are ten things to do with a feeling when you DON'T KNOW what to do with it (but don't want to eat everything in sight)**

### 1. Breathe

Sit tight. Breathe in, breathe out. Feelings come in waves. No feeling, no matter how horrible, will last forever. Breathe in. Breathe out.

### 2. Give yourself permission to feel it

See number one. Also, remember that no feeling is EVER bigger than you. Feel. Breathe. Remind yourself, "I am bigger than this feeling and it will pass."

### 3. Do something physical

Emotions impact us physically. Movement and activity can help us move the emotions through our bodies. Walking, running, dancing and punching a pillow can help us discharge built up emotion and can eventually calm us down.

### 4. Wallow in it

Sometimes a feeling just needs to be felt and sometimes nothing is as therapeutic as a good cry or a time-limited pity party. Let yourself go there. If you need to, set a time limit for when you will move on—and have another activity planned to help you refocus.

### 5. Call a friend

Call someone you trust who cares about you. Tell them you're overwhelmed and need to be listened to. It helps if you can tell them whether you want advice or soothing or just someone to listen to you vent.

### 6. Get perspective

Whatever the situation or the emotion, ask yourself what it will look like and feel like six months from now. A year? Will it be pivotal ten years from now? If not, it doesn't mean your feelings now aren't important. It does mean that life (and you) will go on.

### 7. Distract yourself

Rent a movie, play a video game, read a book, clean out a drawer, wash a window. Focus on something—anything.

**8. Change your scenery**

Do something—anything. Leave the house, go for a walk or a drive, visit a museum or a book store. Wherever you are, go somewhere else.

**9. Empower yourself**

Remind yourself of your strengths. Make a list of your accomplishments. Write down all the tough situations you have survived, the exams you've taken, the children you've given birth to, the challenges you've conquered. Leave no stone unturned and give yourself ample credit.

**10. Sleep**

When you just don't feel up to anything else, take a time out. Take a nap or pack it in and go to bed early. Tomorrow is another day, and often, a good night's sleep can have a big impact.