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Cooking on Campus: FIXING FAST FOOD – Tuesday, 4/4, 5:15-6:30pm • UA Outdoor Rec. Buy a meal, learn to cook for only \$5! Visit cookingoncampus.arizona.edu for more info.

Why Perfect Eating Isn't So Perfect

What does it mean to be a “perfect eater?” Most people would define the perfect eater as someone who always eats healthy, has self-control, never eats junk food, never overeats, always eats just enough (not too much or too little), and never “cheats” or strays from their intentions, and so on.

Have you ever tried to be the perfect eater? You aren't alone. Many people aspire to be perfect eaters but get discouraged when they can't achieve a flawless diet. Here's why being the perfect eater may not be so perfect after all:

- **It's mentally exhausting!**

Trying to be a perfect eater takes a lot of time, energy, and brain space as you try to make sure you always have the best and healthiest foods on hand, look up menus online before going out or avoid going out to eat altogether because nothing is good enough, or sometimes not eating much at all, even at home, because no accessible foods are ever good enough. Whew!... We're exhausted just thinking about it!

- **It isn't healthier.**

Healthy eating does not mean perfect eating. It's actually healthier to allow

yourself to eat all foods in moderation (including occasional treats) because eating this way avoids on and off dieting, is easier to sustain long term, prevents you from feeling deprived, and allows you to eat socially.

- **It can lead to guilt.**

Say you cheat on your perfect diet. Now you feel guilty. So you might as well cheat more, then go back to perfect tomorrow. And for what? Would you have felt guilty if the cheat foods you ate were never off limits in the first place? Probably not. You get the picture.

- **It doesn't last.**

It may be easy to be a perfect eater for a few weeks/months, but after restricting foods you may start to feel like you're missing out. Ask yourself if a perfect diet is something you can maintain for your whole life. If the answer is no, why follow it in the first place?

A better plan is moderation, using the 80-20 Rule. Eighty percent of the time, eat according to your healthy intentions, and the other 20% celebrate! Life is well lived in moderation.



CAMPUS HEALTH

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Food and nutrition services (including healthy eating, cooking skills, weight management, digestive problems, hormonal and cardiovascular diseases, and eating disorders) are offered year-round at Campus Health. Call (520) 621-6483 to make an appointment.