

## ***Part of Knowing Where You're Going Is Knowing Where You've Been***

Many of us have a habit of grazing absent-mindedly throughout the day. Taken individually, each item isn't a big deal; however, when you tally up all the spur-of-the-moment mouthfuls over the span of 12 hours or so, the total can be surprising! It isn't uncommon to hear people say,

***“But I'm sticking to my plan and it's not working.”***

There can be a few reasons for that, of course, but frequently it can be that extra calories and unhealthy choices are just working their way in to your daily or weekly routine.



One way to really see if you're on track is to brutally and honestly write down everything you put in your mouth every day for 1 week. Do not edit yourself! If you ate that candy, jot it down; even when you take a glass of water – everything counts. It's best to write it down in the moment rather than trying to fill in the blanks at the end of the day. Once you have the week written down, take a look at how closely what you've written matches your plan. The reason is not to make you feel bad about what you ate; it's to realize how quickly the mindless eating can add up.



**Keeping a food journal has been scientifically proven to help you stay aware of how you are eating and to help you stick to your goals.**

## *Time for an Emotional Check In*

While you're at it, remember to jot down how you were feeling at different times of the day. **Happy? Bored? Stressed? Angry? Excited?** At the end of the week, see if you notice any patterns in case you can make a link between how you feel and when/what you chose to eat. Also, sometimes the act of simply writing down why you're feeling sad or upset can take away the power of that feeling and start to turn it around.

## *Write What Moves You – Literally!*

Try to note when you chose to take the stairs instead of the escalator, or when you ditched your car in favour of a walk. Write down when you took that aqua fitness class or jogged in place during a TV program. Keeping track of all the different areas of healthy weight management gives you a better look at the big picture in real-time. It also helps you to begin thinking mindfully to notice actions and thoughts that might otherwise be fleeting or forgotten.

## *Doing it for the “Write” Reasons*

**Remember:** tracking your activity, feelings, and food choices is not about looking back over what you've charted to beat yourself up. Quite the opposite! It's to help you understand and be kinder to yourself. It's surprising to see how often we veer off track; **writing it all down helps us take back control and make our plan work.**

## *It's All in Your Gratitude!*

You may have heard of people keeping gratitude journals. You may also think, “Why would I want to do that? I appreciate things without having to chronicle them!” That's true. But where it comes in handy is to be more noticeably conscious and aware of all you have to be grateful for. For many, trying to manage weight is a challenging, sometimes discouraging journey. Being able to pick out the positives every day – even in a day that has been very upsetting – can help shift your thinking, keep emotional eating at bay, and turn your mind to productive things to focus on.

**For example, take a day where you:**

- Left the house late because you overslept.
- Found that the car wouldn't start so you had to scramble for change and run for the bus.
- Got to work to realize that you left your lunch at home so you had to go to the coffee shop at lunch.
- Returned home to find that the insurance representative you rushed home to meet cancelled on you last-minute.

**It may seem like a series of aggravations and time-wasting.**



Enter the gratitude journal, which might read something like this:



**I'm grateful today because:**

- *I got a few extra minutes of sleep... I must have needed it.*
- *I got some physical activity in early in the day when I had to get to the bus.*
- *I actually got to work earlier by taking the bus and not sitting in traffic.*
- *There were healthy choices at the coffee shop and it added a bit of variety to my day.*
- *With the time I had intended to spend with the insurance rep, I went for a pre-dinner walk and had a nice, relaxing bath*

**Sometimes, your gratitude may be brief:**

**I'm grateful to the person who held the door for me today.**

**Or it may be very granular:**

**I'm grateful for feeling the sun on my face today.**

The key is to find at least **1-5 things to be grateful for every day**. Being able to shift your mindset to a happier one is a skill; like any other skill, this can be learned! In spite of any unhelpful self-talk you may be used to hearing, chances are you'll find that this is a powerful way to develop a more positive outlook and how pleasant it is to be on the lookout for how to turn lemons into lemonade.



## What Can I Do?

Decide what will be the best tracking method for you to stick to and that you will use. Traditional paper journal? Phone app? Downloadable template? Like everything else, food/activity/feelings tracking and gratitude journaling are a matter of making into a habit and part of your routine. Let's look at some ways you can start tracking and journaling and start being more aware and accountable for your thoughts and actions:

### How?

- **Make it easy.** If you don't carry a purse or bag, then deciding to use a notebook might be cumbersome and cause you to be more likely to forget it somewhere. Maybe a phone memo feature or app is better in your case. No phone? There are even small voice recording devices that people use to make grocery lists, etc. There are many options out there!

### Why?

- **Have you ever heard the phrase "Write it down and make it happen"?** Besides helping you track and be more accountable for your choices, research shows that making things more concrete by writing them down makes people more likely to stick to them. It can also help you start to see situations where you are setting yourself up for making unhealthy choices. For example, if your usual route home from work takes you past a fast food joint, then maybe finding a new route home can help you avoid a French fry pit stop. Tracking your feelings can help identify times when you may have eaten out of boredom when you weren't actually hungry, or because you had an argument with your spouse. It's all about building self-awareness and how to sidestep such bumps as you continue on your weight management journey.

### What?

- There are a multitude of smartphone apps that can help you easily track your food intake and activity. Many people already have step counters to help them meet daily activity goals. A vast selection of these are free! Here are a few that we like...but do your own research to see which ones will work for you.

■ MyNetDiary	■ Lifesum
■ MyFitnessPal	■ Loselt
■ Fooducate (iOS Apple software only)	■ CalorieCounter

Gratitude apps are also available to make seek• the positive even easier:

■ TrackYourHappiness (iOS Apple software only)	■ RealLifeChange
■ Happify	■ Headspace



### Not tech-savvy?

**Not a problem!** These are all pretty easy to navigate. But if you prefer to put pen to paper, there are many great and motivating fill-in-the-blank journals or some really beautiful blank journals where you can keep track. Here's a jump-start to journaling if you want to get started right now!



Use some of these prompts to get your tracking started and focus shifted:



### Food/Activity/Mood Journal

Below you will see a sample journal that shows one day of the week. You can even add in columns for hydration and sleep if you really want to get the big picture of your daily routines!

#### MONDAY

##### Food

Breakfast: 1 slice toast w/1 TBSP almond butter; coffee w/ 1 TBSP milk

Half a glazed donut

No time for lunch; grabbed snack bar from vending machine

##### Mood Before

Neutral

Anxious about presentation

Rushed

##### Mood After

Neutral

Anxious about presentation

Irritated

##### Activity

Parked car 2 blocks from work and walked briskly (2 times, coming and going)

#### When?

- For best results, try to be as diligent as possible in honestly tracking every bite, every time you're active, as well as any accompanying feelings. Don't worry about what it looks like. Although, ideally, you will log everything in the moment, if it's an awkward time to pull out your phone or notebook just try to do it as soon as you have the chance. The key is to not wait until the end of the day and try to remember everything that took place. It will likely not be accurate!



### Gratitude Journal

The example below just shows a one-day sample but use this to create your own full week of gratitude!

**Each day, look for the good in these areas of your life and briefly jot them down. Sometimes you may only have one item in one category – that's fine. But once you start looking for the positive you may find you need more room to write!**

#### MONDAY

##### Work

Example: *I'm glad I have Julie to bounce ideas off of.*

##### Family/Friends

Example: *Bob's dry sense of humour makes me laugh*

##### Nature

Example: *So grateful that getting out of work a bit late allowed me to catch that beautiful sunset!*

##### Inspirational Experiences

Example: *Loved that the bus driver stopped and waited for the guy running for the bus.*

##### Creature Comforts

Example: *I love my new scarf and how soft it feels.*

#### When?

- For the gratitude journal, it may be more helpful to write that down at the end of the day. You can end on a good note, which may help you relax a bit to be able to sleep easier, as well as wake feeling more positive.



## Mind Shift



### From here

"I've got a good memory... why should I stop and track everything? I'm being careful and following my plan. I'm just one of those people who has more difficulty losing weight than others!"

"I don't want to know what I eat or do every day. If I don't make good choices on a given day or decided to watch TV instead of walk, I'll feel bad about myself."

### To here

"I see how keeping a journal can help me focus more on what my choices are and why I'm choosing them. If I'm being honest, I'm pretty sure I've made a habit of thinking 'this one candy won't hurt' and I probably say that a few times throughout the week... but it probably adds up."

"There is nothing to feel bad about when this is just an exercise to see where I may be sabotaging myself. I know to be kind to myself and how to try to get myself back on track."

### How to get there

Be honest with your tracking. Not charting everything because it "won't look good" on paper isn't going to fool your body into thinking it took in less food or moved more than it actually did!

There is nothing to feel bad about when you are taking steps to take charge of your health. It is always about simply trying to make healthier changes now, not dwelling upon what your choices were yesterday. Your first choice should always be to be kind to yourself. If you have trouble remembering to do that, write that down too!



## Food for Thought

What we should be striving for here is another way to be mindful. Patterns you may not notice as you go about your day may become crystal clear when you see them written down, such as noticing that after your Thursday work meeting you tend to seek out a post-meeting snack. Armed with all this awareness, let's take a look at the pros and cons of not tracking food/activity/mood in the short and long term.



### Pro

I'll feel better about myself if I don't track every little morsel, plus I'll have more time if I don't have to stop and record it all.



### Con

If I don't make time now to jot things down, in the end, I will be taking more time to reach my goal, which may lead me to get discouraged and unmotivated. It's also keeping me in the dark about some patterns that may be easy to fix if I recognize what they are!

As you've learned throughout your journey so far, **knowledge is power**. This is just another way to empower yourself and get real about your choices and how best to reach your goal. Writing things down is a great way to see if your perceptions match reality.

**In your quest for knowledge you have developed skillpower – this will take you much further than willpower!**

In fact, studies have shown that people who keep food journals are able to better manage their weight. Likewise, those who keep gratitude journals were seen to be happier and even tend to exercise more.



Now *that's* something to chew on!

And remember, if at any time you have questions about your **CONTRAVE** therapy and would like to speak to a nurse counsellor, call **1-855-CNTRAVE (1-855-268-7283)** from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday to Friday EST.

**CONTRAVE** is a prescription medicine that is used for weight management:

- in patients who have obesity or;
- in patients with overweight and at least one medical condition associated with their weight (such as high blood pressure that is controlled with medicine, Type 2 diabetes, or a high amount of lipids (cholesterol or other types of fat) in the blood)

**CONTRAVE** should be used along with a reduced-calorie diet and increased physical activity.

**CONTRAVE** should be taken exactly as your Healthcare Professional tells you to.

Please refer to the **Patient Medication Information** insert in your product package for important safety information.

**Contrave** **Support  
program**