

REST & DIGEST

Do you rest and digest or eat and run?



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Are you allowing yourself to get the most from your nutrition? The types and quantities of food we consume, no doubt, play the most important role in the progression towards better health. Have you ever thought about your behaviors during food consumption?

Where do you eat most of your meals?

Who do you eat most of your meals with?

How long does it take you to eat a full meal?

How long do you spend chewing each bite of food?

Do you drink liquids with your meals?

What do you do after your meals?

Many Americans have become accustomed to fast-paced lifestyles. We spend more daylight hours at work than with our families, consume food from a window rather than our refrigerator, and sit down on the couch watching the tv instead of at the table with our loved ones.

We have adopted an eat-and-run mentality while abandoning our rest and digest roots.

The fact that we have shifted from eating at home with our families to eating on the go isn't groundbreaking by any means, however, I want to help you see why this is less favorable for our physical and emotional health.

For most of human existence, food and shelter were our main priorities. We lived in tribes where there was a collective effort to hunt and gather food. When food was gathered the hard work was over. This allowed us to relax and enjoy the meal that came our way. As a community, we would bond over the nourishment.

Rest and Digest is referred to as a parasympathetic state in neuroscience. This means that our body feels calm, safe, and ready to recover from the day's energy expenditure. This state is achieved when our brain and body are not overstimulated by our environment (both internally and externally).

The issue arises when our lifestyle habits shift us to a sympathetic state. This state is referred to as fight or flight. Our nervous system is on high alert due to an overstimulating environment, survival threats, or excessive physical stress.

Staying in a sympathetic state decreases our ability to digest our food. Due to the brain perceiving environmental threats our body will not allocate as many resources to digesting the food we consume because it fears that we may have to fight or flee at any moment.

Behaviors that decrease digestion:

- Eating meals in a rush
- Eating meals while driving
- Eating meals while watching a screen (phone, tv, laptop, etc..)
- Eating meals after the sun has gone down
- Eating meals from fast food/restaurants
- Consuming large amounts of liquids directly before or during meals

Behaviors that promote digestion

- Sitting down and connecting with family
- Slowly chewing eat a bite (20-30 times)
- Preparing your meals at home
- Going for a walk outside after your meal
- Waiting to consume liquids until after your meal

Life may not allow you to take 30-60 minutes to prepare and consume each meal, and that is okay.

For the next week, I challenge you to pick one meal a day to unplug from technology, bond over whole foods, and go for a walk in nature with a few of the humans who mean the most to you.

THANK YOU FOR READING!



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