

Stop When 80 Percent Full

The Blue Zones Project is a community initiative to help improve well-being. In each issue, we have highlighted one of the nine core principles of the program. This time, we're focusing on the "80% Rule." Researchers found that people who live longer and healthier lives don't eat too much at any given meal. In other words, they stop eating when they are 80 percent full—hence the "80% Rule."

The root of this strategy is a Japanese phrase, "Hara Hachi Bu," that loosely translates to "Eat until just 80 percent full" and ties in with a Japanese proverb that reads: "Eight parts of a full stomach sustain the man; the other two sustain the doctor."

And while we all may agree this is a good idea, it can be easier said than done. Deb Logan, executive director of the Blue Zones Project for Southwest Florida, suggests that a good way to implement this is to start with an intention to eat mindfully. "You may say grace before a meal or just have a mindful moment," she says. "Then actually push away from the table before you feel full and know that the fullness will catch up with you."

"We know that it takes 20 minutes after eating to feel full," Logan contin-

ues. "So there's a lag. And especially if you're eating something you really enjoy or if you're distracted while you're eating, you can go past that full-

Sit at a table for your meal. Don't eat while driving, watching TV, or using your phone or computer.

Before you dig in, look at the colors of the food and smell it. Take a moment to be grateful for this food that will nourish you.

Slow down your eating. If a meal normally takes you 10 minutes to eat, try to stretch it out to 15. Cut your food up smaller, chew more slowly and pause between bites.

Be sure the food you're eating is something you actually enjoy. If not, skip it.

Try to eat with someone else. Put your fork down between bites and focus on the conversation with that person.

Start by trying to leave one bite on the plate. Work up to leaving two. Eventually leave a third of what's on your plate, which you can save for another meal.

"Many of us grew up learning that we had to clean the plate at every meal, or with a fear that we would not have enough to eat," Logan says. "Make an effort to change your daily practice, remembering that if you are hungry later, you can have a snack." But chances are, 80 percent of what's on your plate will be plenty to leave you satisfied. **NH**



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ness and essentially eat 20 percent more calories than you need." She offers some tips to help: