

# Episode: When You Don't Eat Enough



## Full Transcript

HEALTHY EATING FOR BUSY WOMEN PODCAST  
WITH KAT RENTAS

# Episode: When You Don't Eat Enough

Hello, my friend. I hope you're doing very well today. I just want to kick off today's episode by saying how incredibly thankful I am for those of you who are listening to this podcast and loving it. I'm getting emails from you guys saying what episodes you're finding valuable so far and it makes me so grateful for what I do. And that I'm able to provide value to you in this way here in this podcast. So, I appreciate your kind words so much. Anyways, today, we're going to talk about what happens when you don't eat enough. So, last week we discussed what happens when you eat too much. And today, we're going to talk about the opposite. We're going to discuss what happens when you're undereating or restricting food.

Now, it's important to understand first, that even if you're someone who doesn't think they struggle with restricting food or underfeeding yourself, this knowledge will be so important to you if you want to change your eating habits in general. Because overeating and undereating tend to go hand in hand. One rarely exists without the other in some way, shape, or form. So, if you consider yourself an overeater, it's definitely very important that you learn about undereating as well. Also, because most undereating is unconscious. It's not necessarily happening intentionally. And this can lead to eating habits you don't really want long-term. So, that being said, I'm really excited to talk more about this. There's a lot of confusion and noise around this subject so I can't wait to clear it up for you here.

Undereating can be defined as eating less than your body needs to function properly. Seems simple, right? Very basic.

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What makes this definition, and the concept of undereating, so confusing for people is because most don't have a good concept of what it really means for our bodies to function properly. For most of us, our bodies functioning properly means to us, that our bodies are alive. If we're really being honest, that's what we consider functional. We're not taught what it really means for our bodies to be functional and dysfunctional at a core health level. And the ways that undereating causes your body to not function properly are things that are not so obvious to you. For example, we don't consider low energy levels, nutritional imbalances, weight retention or stress responses to be dysfunctional symptoms of undereating. We don't even really consider the dysfunctional symptoms of undereating nowadays.. Because, here's the thing. Most people in today's diet culture would be totally fine restricting food if it gave them the external results with their bodies that they wanted. Which is upsetting. And what's even more upsetting is that these people who desperately want to lose weight quickly, think that undereating is the answer to getting those results that they want. And undereating is never the answer. If you're not eating enough, you will eventually self-sabotage your weight loss efforts and be in a worse place than before. I promise you. And there is a way to get the results you want without restricting food in this way. One hundred percent.

So, just to give you an example of where our collective mindset is around undereating, I will tell you a quick story. Right now it is 2020 and we're in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic. My boyfriend Taylor and I live with our little dog Gus in North Florida. And earlier on, we happened to get the virus. So, we got COVID and it was not fun, but are okay, safe, and healthy as of now. Very thankful for that.

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And during this time, I lost my sense of taste and smell for about a week. Which to my surprise, made my body very naturally disinterested in eating food. Because I wasn't getting that satisfaction from it. I would actually forget to eat at times and it was a new experience for me that I'm glad is over. Now, when I shared this experience with people after the fact, almost everyone said something to me along the lines of, "Wow! That's so useful. I wish I had a good excuse not to eat for a week". Now, obviously this would come from a place of joking and lightheartedness, but it still was weirdly unsettling for me. That I was in a place where I was sick and unable to access my appetite, and the silver lining to other people was that I didn't feel the need to feed myself properly. So crazy, right? That we're so obsessed with this belief system that to eat less is almost a badge honor. Because in some way it will lead you to results that you want with your body. Now, obviously I just laughed along a bit, like "Yeah, okay whatever". But inside I was like, oh my gosh, we have work to do as a human being with a body in this culture we live in.

I personally like to define undereating as eating less food than is serving you and your health. Because not only is underfeeding yourself very damaging to your body's physiology, but it's also not serving you and the results you want to create with your body. If you are not eating enough, you will not create sustainable healthy eating habits that feel easy for you. Meaning, you will not create sustainable weight loss results that last. And this is mainly because of the cycle that I see when it comes to undereating. And I like to call this "the cycle of suffering" because that is literally what will happen. So, this cycle starts with the desire to lose weight. You want to lose weight and create different results with your body, so you go on a restrictive diet.

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And restrictive dieting means attempting to follow strict food rules written by someone other than yourself. So, you're on this diet and you feel excited to finally achieve those results with your body that you've wanted for so long. You feel super motivated. And this motivation lasts a while. But then, your old eating habits come back. You start craving those foods that you eliminated from your diet. And eventually you quote unquote fall off track. Which for most people they overeat and engage in binge eating episodes. From here, you will gain the weight back. And re-enter this cycle of suffering with the desire to lose weight. You'll go on another diet, restrict foods, and this cycle will go on and on.

Now, I experienced this cycle many, many times in my past. And I really want to say, wholeheartedly, that if you've ever experienced this cycle, that I understand how mind-numbing it can feel. And I'm so grateful that you've found your way to this podcast. Because this endless undereating cycle is such a huge reason why I'm passionate about this work. Because there is a way to feed yourself properly and still get the results with your body that you desire and deserve. You don't have to suffer, force yourself to eat a certain way, or restrict food to do that.

And it's important to know on a deeper level why undereating doesn't work. In terms of the mind, undereating doesn't work because you'll only be focused on the food actions. So, in past episodes you learned that thoughts cause your feelings, which lead to the actions you take with food, which create the results you have with your body.

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This is just the sequence of how life works. And this is the sequence that creates the results you have with food and body. So, when you're restricting food, it's highly likely that you're attempting to force yourself to eat a certain way. So, in this way, you're trying to use willpower to force yourself to take different actions with food. So you can see new results with your body. Well, without addressing your thoughts or feelings, forcing yourself to take different actions will not work. You cannot force yourself to take actions that are inauthentic to your current brain. You will eventually self-sabotage those eating habits and re-create the same actions with food that have always been there for you. For more on this be sure to check out the first episode "Why You Don't Eat Healthy". We talk all about that.

In terms of the body, there's a huge, massive, monumental reason why undereating doesn't work. And why it doesn't serve you. It's because when you undereat, your body automatically enters a survival response. When you don't feed your body enough food, your body has all sorts of emergency measures to protect you and keep you alive. Because your body doesn't know that underfeeding yourself was intentional on your part. As far as your body's concerned, a famine is occurring in the world and it's going to make sure you stay alive through it. So, the measures it has in place. When you don't eat enough your body will enter a survival response. And this response will cause your body to retain weight, you will naturally crave excess food, your metabolism will decrease so your body can conserve energy – among other things. So, in essence, what your body is doing when you don't eat enough is it's going into starvation-mode. Which, in case you didn't know, means your body is doing exactly what it should be doing.

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This is a sign your body is working. Even though these are side effects that you don't want, right? Many people will actually feel like a victim of these responses from their body. Funnily enough. They'll restrict food for so long and then create this starvation response in their body. And then, they'll say how they're a victim of their body retaining fat. Or their neverending cravings for food. Or their lower metabolism. Even though they created this stress-survival-starvation state due to them not eating enough in the past. And to be honest, I felt like a victim of the state of my body in the past. I was definitely involved in undereating patterns. And I felt like a victim of these symptoms because I wasn't aware of the fact that I was creating them. And this further puts you in that cycle of suffering we talked about, because many people will continue to undereat so they can get rid of these symptoms from their body. Even though the undereating is what causes your body to go into this state! So crazy.

From here, we need to begin questioning what is normal with food and our bodies. It's important that we take a real look at where our culture has gotten to when it comes to underfeeding ourselves. I want to ask you to be really honest with yourself and think "When did I begin normalizing underfeeding my human body? When did that become acceptable in any way? When did this manner of treating our bodies become normal?". And this isn't meant to punish yourself for thinking this way in the past. It's for you to become aware as to how collectively as a culture we've normalized not eating enough. In fact, we've given credit to people who eat very little. We consider them supremely healthy, with lots of self-discipline and willpower. We glorify those people much of the time. And it's time for your sake and for the sake of future generations of women that we put a stop to this. Because it isn't serving our relationship with food, our bodies, or ultimately ourselves.

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And I want to make something very clear. Because I think it's not said enough. Your body's only job is to keep you alive. It's not to get you to lose X amount of pounds before a big event. It's not to fall in line with the standards of beauty our society has created. It's not to get you fitting into those jeans you used to wear in college. Your body's only job is to keep you alive and healthy. That's all it ever cares about. So, know that when your body is experiencing symptoms like weight retention, cravings, or low energy, that this is your body trying to communicate it's needs to you. So, it can keep you alive and safe. It's time we stop expecting things from our body from a place of desperation and greed. And begin appreciating our body for what it does for us every single day, which is keeping us alive. Which is amazing.

I find that at the root of a lot of under eating patterns is a lack of love and respect for one's body. Or the constant need to change one's body out of the belief of it "not being good enough". I think this is unfortunately very common for us women. We're not taught from a young age how to respect, love, and appreciate our bodies for how they are right now. I remember from a very young age I was exposed to dieting culture and restrictive eating tendencies. From everyone around me at the time. Young girls, mothers – everybody. It's just the way culture was. It seemed extremely normal. The skinnier you were, the happier you were was the core belief system. There's no question, we are not taught to unconditionally love our bodies from a young age. And from there, we're put in an even deeper hole, because as women, we're taught to not love our bodies as well. We're constantly being convinced that our body isn't enough as it is. Cookie-cutter standards of beauty are constantly being exposed to us from a young age.



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Now, thankfully, I notice with brands and companies that things are starting to get better. And many people are taking a different approach in their marketing. But, it's still not enough for many of us. Because we've been living under the belief system for most of our lives, that to be smaller, skinnier, and to feed ourselves less food is to be happy and fulfilled. I know this belief system ran rampant in my mind for years.

Instead of focusing on how you want your body to change, I want you to focus on the relationship you have with your body right now. And I want you to think about moments when you tried to underfeed your body in hopes that restricting food would give you the weight loss results you wanted. Go to that place and think about those times when you were willing to not eat enough. And ask yourself the question, "What would my body say about how I treated it during that time?". For me, in the past, my body would have said that I neglected it's needs. My body would have said that the relationship was one-sided. My body would have said that I never felt like it was enough. Doing this exercise, and observing your actual relationship with your body in times of undereating will do so much for you. It will allow you to see the damage that undereating has on your connection with your body over time. This is a great place to start so I encourage you to ask yourself this question and to see what comes up for you.

Alright, my lovely beautiful friend. I hope this was helpful to you. Thank you for listening. And I'll talk to you next week.