

# BREAK FREE FROM WEEKEND BINGES



HOW TO EAT LIKE A NORMAL  
PERSON AGAIN

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**GIVE ME 15 MINUTES AND I'LL  
SHOW YOU HOW TO BREAK FREE  
FROM WEEKEND BINGES**

# THIS IS NOT AN E-BOOK.

This is a fast action guide.

You won't find any fluff or filler here, only actionable steps and solid facts that will help you to regain control over your eating habits, eliminate unplanned snacking and break free from weekend binges.

Actually, it's not even a fast-action guide.

THIS IS YOU taking back control of your body.

For a second, imagine how much more you would enjoy food if you could avoid falling into the binge eating trap. What difference would that make?

However, in the interest of transparency, let me say that breaking free from weekend binges will probably NOT cause massive weight loss, but you will feel more confident and more in control around food.

Imagine waking up and realising food doesn't feel chaotic anymore, that's what these steps will help you build: the self-confidence to know that you are choosing what you eat, you are no longer controlled by your habits and cravings

Before I show you exactly how to regain control of your cravings and dramatically reduce binge eating, let me address three false beliefs.

# 3 FALSE BELIEFS

# FALSE BELIEF I

“

You think: It's too late, everyone knows that menopause makes you gain weight.

## What's Actually True:

Research shows that menopause is not the main cause of weight gain after 50. During menopause, fluctuating levels of hormones change how body fat is stored, moving more of it to the abdominal area, or the “menopause middle”. However, the changing hormone levels are not the actual cause of the weight gain.

Instead, factors like age-related muscle loss, a slower metabolism, and lifestyle choices play a far bigger role. As we age, our body naturally loses muscle mass, which can lower resting metabolism, making it easier to gain weight. This process, combined with genetics and daily habits, has a much greater impact on our weight than menopause itself.

One of those habits is binge eating, which leads to eating more calories than we need, which leads to a gradual increase in body fat.

None of this means you've done anything wrong, it simply explains why things have felt more difficult lately .

# FALSE BELIEF 2



**You think:** Binge eating just means I don't have any willpower, I have any self-control.

## **What's Actually True:**

Fortunately, you don't need to rely on willpower. The key to managing binge eating or emotional snacking is about understanding and addressing the emotional triggers behind your habits. Often, what drives your eating patterns has more to do with routines and choices that you have unconsciously nurtured overtime than with self-control.

Consider how the small choices you make each day shape your energy level, your appearance, and your overall health. For example, maybe your day starts with a bowl of overnight oats, blueberries and sprinkled with toasted almonds—a healthy habit that reflects your shopping list and what's stocked in your kitchen. Over time, that daily breakfast becomes a ritual you don't even think about.

Similarly, evening snacks often become automatic habits. Maybe you reach for crisps or a glass of wine after a long day as a way to reward yourself. You're not alone in wanting a little treat after a busy, stressful day—rewards can be meaningful. But when the “reward” leaves you feeling guilty or feeling that you have ruined a day of healthy eating, it's a reward worth rethinking.

Rather than relying on willpower to resist, focus on reshaping the habits and routines that influence your choices. A reward should make you feel good about yourself, not guilty.

# FALSE BELIEF 3



You worry that your family and friends will laugh at you for trying yet another weight loss plan

I am reminded of the quote,

*"When you're 20, you worry what people think about you, when 40 you stop worrying what people think about you, and when 60 you realise no-one was thinking about you in the first place"*

## What's Actually True:

I don't want to trivialise this fear, of course it is normal to worry about what those around you think or say, you don't want to hear cries of "not another diet!"

But often, this worry reflects your own self-doubt rather than anyone else's judgment. The reality is, most people are supportive or simply focused on their own lives rather than criticising anyone else's journey.

Cultivating self-compassion and keeping the focus on your personal growth is key. Remember, this journey is about you and your goals—not anyone else's opinions. When you release yourself from the need for others' approval, you can step into each new chapter with confidence, knowing you're making choices for your own well-being.

# I'VE BEEN WHERE YOU ARE.

I had tried every diet—low carb, low fat, intermittent fasting, counting every calorie, every point, every carb. I weighed every bite and even drank “magic” teas, all in the hope that something would finally work.

I would go all day eating as little as possible, saving up my food allowance for the evening, only to find myself ravenously hungry at the end of the day and unable to stop eating once I started.

And each time I binged, I'd feel frustrated, defeated, and guilty that I couldn't just control myself.

I know, without a doubt, that you, too, can break free from the binge-guilt cycle and achieve the healthy, balanced life you deserve.

Endless, conflicting advice only left me more overwhelmed.

So, I took matters into my own hands, went back to university and earned a Master of Science degree in Food, Health and Nutrition, I dove deep into studying nutrition. I wanted to understand what really works, and to separate fact from fad. I uncovered where I'd been going wrong and how my habits were setting me up to fail. Slowly, I rebuilt my relationship with food, learning to let go of deprivation and guilt.

Over time, I lost 40 pounds, but more importantly, I found a new way of living. I developed habits that support my health and allow me to stay at a weight that feels good—without feeling deprived or like I'm missing out.

# THE 3 STEPS TO BREAK FREE FROM WEEKEND BINGES

Breaking free from binge eating isn't about strict rules or endless self-discipline; it's about understanding your triggers, nourishing your body, and creating an environment that supports your goals. Each of these steps is designed to help you build a healthy, balanced relationship with food—one where cravings don't control you, and you feel strong and confident in your choices.

# IN THIS NEXT SECTION, WE'LL WALK THROUGH THREE POWERFUL STEPS WHICH WILL INCLUDE:

**Identifying Triggers & Managing Cravings** - you will learn to recognise what drives the urge to binge and how to manage it with awareness and intention.

**Eating More Protein** - you will discover how adding satisfying protein sources can curb cravings, stabilise energy, and reduce the impulse to overeat.

**Creating a Supportive Environment** - we will work through how to set up your supportive environment, as you build your habit of making healthier choices and avoid pitfalls along the way.

Each step is simple but effective, and together they form a sustainable approach to help you feel more in control of your eating habits and at ease with your food choices.

*Let's get started on this journey to a healthier, more empowered you.*



**STEP 1: CATCH YOURSELF IN THE  
MOMENT**

Here's the moment things start to shift – catching yourself *as* the urge appears.

Begin by noticing what's going on when you feel the urge to binge. Take a moment to pause and reflect: what happened in the last 20 minutes? What thoughts or feelings are coming up? Are you stressed, bored, or perhaps feeling a little down?

Ask yourself honestly: Am I truly hungry, or am I reaching for food to fill another kind of need? Often, when we catch ourselves reaching for that familiar snack, we're responding to a trigger, not to actual hunger. Maybe it was a stressful day at work, an unresolved feeling, or simply a habit that leads us to the kitchen. This awareness is especially crucial for women post-menopause, as hormonal shifts and lifestyle changes often introduce new triggers and emotions.

## Understanding Triggers and Cravings

A trigger can be any event, emotion, or sensation that precedes a binge-eating episode. It might be the frustration of a tough day, a moment of loneliness, or even just coming home to a quiet, empty house. You may find yourself reaching for high-calorie comfort foods, like a bag of crisps or a slice of buttered toast, only to feel guilty later on.

**Cravings are different from hunger—they are strong, often irresistible, desires for specific foods, typically high in sugar, salt, or fat.** Rather than judging these impulses, it's helpful to view them as signals. Your body or mind is asking for something, whether it's physical nourishment or emotional relief. The goal isn't to shut down these cravings but to understand and respond to them in ways that support you.



# PRACTICAL TOOLS TO IDENTIFY TRIGGERS

Building self-awareness is fundamental. Here are some tools to help you recognise patterns and understand what leads to binge urges:

## 1. Journaling:

Start writing down your thoughts, emotions, and cravings around food. Track what you eat, when you eat it, and how you feel before and after eating. This process often reveals patterns, showing how certain feelings drive your eating habits.

## 2. Reflection Exercises:

Take a few minutes each day to reflect on emotions that felt challenging and how you reacted. Questions like, “Did I reach for food to manage stress today?” or “Was I eating to cope with a difficult emotion?” can be enlightening. For instance, after a frustrating event like an unkind comment or a stressful commute, you might reach for chocolate to soothe your nerves. By reflecting on these moments, you start to identify how certain emotions lead to certain eating choices.

## 3. Food and Mood Tracking:

Use the notes section, on your phone or on an app like MyFitnessPal, to track both food intake and emotional patterns. Logging emotions and meals can highlight trends and help you see connections between your emotional state and eating habits.

# BUILDING ALTERNATIVES TO EMOTIONAL EATING

If you find yourself craving a snack, try asking, “Would I be satisfied with protein and veggies, for example carrot sticks and hummus, or boiled eggs and cucumber?” If not, it’s likely emotional rather than physical hunger. When cravings are emotionally driven, take a moment to consider other ways to meet that need. Go for a short walk, unwind with a warm bath, or curl up with a book. Self-care can be as simple as taking a few deep breaths or chatting with a friend.

*Recognising these triggers and choosing other ways to care for yourself will help you replace old habits with healthier, more fulfilling ones.*

Catching yourself in the moment is a powerful tool to break free from weekend binges and regain control over your relationship with food.



# STEP 2: INCORPORATE SATISFYING PROTEIN SOURCES



## Need more energy? Eat more protein.

- Want stronger nails and healthier skin? Protein can help.
- Concerned about losing muscle with age? Protein supports muscle retention.
- Adding more protein to your diet is one of the simplest, most effective ways to curb cravings and reduce binge-eating episodes. For women over 50, protein often becomes the answer to many common concerns:

And here's some good news: eating more protein can help you break the binge cycle, too.

### Why Protein Works to Curb Cravings

Protein will make you feel fuller and more satisfied after meals, which naturally helps you regulate your food intake. Unlike carbs or fats, protein has a higher thermic effect—meaning your body uses more energy to digest and metabolise it. This contributes to feelings of fullness and helps prevent the blood sugar crashes that often lead to cravings for sugary or high-calorie foods.

**Protein is also essential for maintaining lean muscle, which declines with age. Lean muscle helps stabilise metabolism, making it easier to maintain a healthy weight.**

Additionally, protein aids in balancing the hormones that regulate hunger and stress, including leptin (which signals fullness) and ghrelin (which signals hunger). This hormonal balance is vital for keeping emotional and impulsive eating in check.

Another benefit of protein is its role in building neurotransmitters, like serotonin, that help regulate mood and appetite. Regular servings of protein throughout the day provide your body with the amino acids it needs to support these neurotransmitters, helping you maintain a stable mood and avoid turning to food for comfort.

## How to Include More Protein in Your Diet

Unlike fat and carbohydrate, your body cannot store protein, so it's essential to eat it consistently throughout the day. A good starting goal is around two servings of protein at each meal or snack. (*Think of a serving as around 20-30g of protein—about a palm-sized portion of meat or a cup of Greek yogurt*)

Here's a list of high-protein foods and some easy ways to incorporate them into your meals each day:

### Breakfast Options

- Veggie omelette with turkey and spinach
- Greek yogurt topped with chia seeds and almond
- Quinoa breakfast bowl with fruit and nuts

### Mid-Morning Snack Ideas

- Hard-boiled eggs with sliced veggies
- Cottage cheese with berries and chia seeds

### Lunch Options

- Grilled chicken salad with mixed greens and quinoa
- Tuna salad on whole grain toast
- Black bean and lentil soup with vegetables

### Afternoon Snacks

- Greek yogurt with pumpkin seeds and honey
- Almonds and apple slices
- Chickpea and veggie snack bowl

### Dinner Options

- Baked salmon with roasted vegetables and quinoa
- Turkey and vegetable stir-fry with brown rice

# THE IMPACT OF PROTEIN ON YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH FOOD

For women over 50, a protein-rich diet doesn't just support physical health; it promotes mental well-being and helps maintain steady energy levels throughout the day. By stabilising blood sugar, enhancing satiety, and supporting hormone balance, protein can help you feel in control of your cravings and reduce the likelihood of binge eating.

This approach isn't about restricting or depriving yourself—it's about nourishing your body in ways that align with your health goals, so you can feel empowered, vibrant, and free from guilt around food.



A man and a woman are in a kitchen, smiling and holding a cup and a glass of orange juice. The man is on the left, wearing a grey sweater, and the woman is on the right, wearing a blue tank top. They are both looking at each other. In the foreground, there is a plate of fruit, including strawberries and blueberries, and a glass of orange juice. The background shows a kitchen counter with a green stove and some dishes.

**STEP 3: CREATE A  
SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT  
TO CURB BINGE EATING**

# UNDERSTANDING THE POWER OF YOUR ENVIRONMENT

When it comes to curbing binge eating, the saying “out of sight, out of mind” holds true. We’re constantly surrounded by tempting images of food in advertisements, TV shows, and social media—visual cues that often make it hard to stick to healthy choices. Studies show that simply seeing food, even just photos of food, can trigger cravings and lead to impulsive snacking. This is especially true when we’re tired, stressed, or already vulnerable to mindless eating.

So, how can you stack the odds in your favour? By setting up an environment that supports your goals rather than undermines them.

## CREATING YOUR OWN “TRIGGER-FREE” ENVIRONMENT

One of the most effective ways to reduce binge-eating urges is by removing tempting, binge-trigger foods from your immediate surroundings and making the healthy choice easier. When healthier options are the default, you’ll rely less on willpower, which can be a limited resource, and more on the environment you’ve shaped for your success.

Here's how to create an environment that aligns with your health goals:

## 1. Declutter Your Kitchen

Start by going through your kitchen cupboards and removing any foods you associate with bingeing or emotional eating, consider donating them or storing them out of sight. Even throwing out foods that don't align with your goals is a healthier choice than keeping them on hand as potential setbacks. Don't treat your body like a bin, you deserve better.

## 2. Make Healthy Choices Visible

Arrange nutrient-rich snacks like fruits, nuts, yogurt, or pre-cut vegetables in places that are easy to see and reach. Position these items at the front of your fridge or pantry, making them the first thing you see when you're hungry or looking for a snack. We are more likely to eat foods that are visible and accessible, let this work to your advantage by making healthy options the most convenient.

## 3. Balance Your Snacks

Try pairing proteins with complex carbs or healthy fats in your snacks to keep you full and energised for longer. This balance not only provides sustained energy but also helps curb the urge to reach for sugary or salty "quick-fix" snacks.

## 4. Organise Your Fridge

Place healthier choices like cut vegetables, hard-boiled eggs, or hummus at eyelevel, while keeping less nutritious options hidden at the back or in the salad drawer (no-one will find them there!). This simple reorganisation can make a big difference in reducing impulse choices.

## **5. Prepare Meals and Snacks in Advance**

Stocking up on healthy ingredients is just the start—having pre-made meals snacks on hand can prevent you from reaching for quick, less nutritious options. Set aside a few minutes each week to prepare your favourite healthy meals and snacks. This removes the stress of last-minute decisions and makes choosing a healthy option feel effortless.

## **6. Establish Eating Zones**

Designate specific areas for eating, like the dining table, and avoid eating in places associated with mindless snacking, like the couch or your bed. Creating these “no-eating zones” reinforces mindful eating and can help reduce the likelihood of bingeing in front of the TV or during other distractions.

## **7. Reevaluate the “Treats for Guests” Idea**

If you tend to keep trigger foods for visitors or family, consider if this is truly necessary. More often than not, your guests will enjoy healthier options, too! If you must buy treats, let guests take leftovers home to avoid keeping tempting foods around after they leave.

# SHAPING A SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

Controlling your food environment is a powerful way to support mindful eating and reduce binge-eating urges. By creating a “trigger-free” space, you’re setting yourself up for success, making intentional choices easier and helping you stay on track without unnecessary temptations.

These small adjustments can have a big impact, promoting a sustainable and positive relationship with food that supports your health goals and encourages lasting change. **This isn’t about deprivation but about empowerment—making choices that align with the vibrant, healthy lifestyle you deserve.**



# COMMON MISTAKES TO AVOID WHEN BREAKING THE BINGE CYCLE

When making positive changes, it's easy to fall into common traps that can sabotage your progress. Here are three mistakes to watch for as you work through these steps:

# MISTAKE I: ADOPTING AN “ALL-OR-NOTHING” MINDSET

**Explanation:** Many women with a history of binge eating often view their journey in extremes: either they’re “on track” and sticking perfectly to their plan, or they’ve “failed” entirely. This all-or-nothing mindset can lead to guilt and self-sabotage after even minor setbacks, reinforcing the binge cycle and making progress feel impossible.

**Solution:** Aim for progress over perfection. Slip-ups are a normal part of change and do not define your journey. When a setback occurs, practise self-compassion by acknowledging your progress rather than focusing on any perceived failure. Reframe slip-ups as learning opportunities to understand your triggers better and refine your approach. This mindset makes it easier to stay motivated and avoid unnecessary guilt.





## MISTAKE 2: IGNORING EMOTIONAL TRIGGERS

**Explanation:** Don't skip the essential work of identifying emotional triggers, hoping that changes to food choices alone will be enough. This is understandable—facing emotions can feel uncomfortable, and focusing only on diet may seem simpler.

However, without addressing emotional triggers, it's likely that the bingeing cycle will continue, as unprocessed emotions often drive eating habits.

**Solution:** Start by tracking your emotions around eating episodes. Spend a few minutes daily journaling or using an app to capture your feelings before, during, and after eating. This builds self-awareness and helps you recognize patterns between your emotions and eating habits. If this feels challenging, start small with questions like, “What am I feeling right now?” and gradually increase your reflections from there. Identifying these emotional drivers can help you manage them in healthier ways.



## MISTAKE 3: RELYING ON WILLPOWER INSTEAD OF ENVIRONMENT CONTROL

**Explanation:** Many women believe that stronger willpower will help them resist binge foods, underestimating the impact of their surroundings. But willpower is a limited resource and can deplete over time, especially when tempting foods are readily available. Relying solely on willpower often leads to cycles of resisting, then eventually giving in to cravings, followed by guilt.

**Solution:** Create a supportive environment to reduce reliance on willpower. Organise your kitchen by placing healthy snacks in visible, easy-to-reach spots while storing trigger foods out of sight or removing them entirely. When healthier choices are the most accessible, you won't need to rely on willpower alone. This proactive step makes it easier to avoid temptations and stick to your goals without feeling deprived.

By avoiding these common mistakes and focusing on self-compassion, emotional awareness, and environmental support, you'll build a more sustainable approach to breaking the binge eating cycle.

Each small adjustment reinforces your progress and brings you closer to a balanced relationship with food.

*Breaking the binge cycle isn't about perfection, restriction, or drastic changes —it's about creating a mindful relationship with food, one that empowers you rather than holds you captive.*

By catching your triggers, incorporating satisfying protein sources, shaping a supportive environment, and practicing self-compassion, you're laying a strong foundation for lasting change.

Remember, each positive choice you make, however small, is a step toward taking back control and feeling confident in your own skin. This journey is about honouring your health, tuning into your true needs, and embracing a life where food no longer defines your day.

Progress happens one decision at a time, and each one builds resilience.

So go ahead, give yourself grace, celebrate each small victory, and keep moving forward. **You're not just breaking a habit—you're building a new, empowered way of living. And that's a reason to feel proud, every step of the way.**

**READY FOR THE  
NEXT STEP?**

Breaking Free From the Weekend Binges is just the beginning. If you're ready to dive deeper, explore your habits, and build a truly sustainable, guilt-free relationship with food, let's work together.

Drop me an email [niamh@wellnessmatters.ie](mailto:niamh@wellnessmatters.ie) to book a time that suits you

In just 60 minutes, we'll delve into what's holding you back and create a personalised path to lasting change. This is your time to reclaim control and feel confident in your body again—I'd love to help you get there!