



  
**KEEP  
CALM  
AND  
CARRY  
ON**



# Ten Ways to Soothe Yourself Without Food

## 1. Create a Self-Soothing Tool Kit.

Fill a box with soothing items such as bubble bath, gum, tea bags, journal, bubble wrap to squeeze when angry etc. These items reduce your cortisol level, the stress hormone that makes you crave sugary, fatty foods. Keep this box handy and in hot spots for comfort eating such as on your desk or in your pantry.

## 3. Black Tea.

A cup of black tea (which has zero calories!) can reduce your cortisol levels by 47% according to a study in a journal of Psychopharmacology.

## 5. Chewing.

Chewing gum for 15 minutes before you eat can significantly reduce your appetite and curb cravings (study in the journal of Appetite). Brain scans show that it moves your brain into a "relaxed but alert" state. The perfect antidote to boredom eat.

## 7. Kombolói.

(Worry beads). Greek in origin and reminiscent of prayer ropes. Keep the rope in your hand. Use the beads to work off nervous energy. They have a long history of helping people cope with addictive behaviors.

## 9. Rag Doll Relaxation.

Anxiety is at the heart of many of our mindless nibbles. To calm down your body, you can do a very simple relaxation exercise. Drop down your muscles as if you were a rag doll. Tense up your body and then assume the position again. The contrast between tightening and relaxing can help unlock anxiety. Easy to do at your desk or in the car!

## 2. Self-Massage.

People naturally do self-massage when stressed like rubbing their temples or feet. Intentionally and purposefully massaging tight spots can release feel-good chemicals. Place a tennis ball under your foot and rub. Or, place the ball behind your shoulder blades against the wall. It's an instant, cheap massage!

## 4. Chocolate Fix.

Substitute your typical sweet fix with chocolate coconut water which is a great boost of potassium and hydrate you quickly. Dehydration=stress on the body=emotional eating. Or, try chocolate tea by Republic of Tea.

## 6. Chew Sticks.

Like toothpicks but flavored. Purchase at natural health foods stores. Historically, they have been used as a natural way to help people lose weight and stop smoking. Straws can also help alleviate oral fixations—the need to crunch and chew.

## 8. Tapping.

In clinical studies, participants who were taught tapping skills, an acupuncture-like technique, showed significant improvements in weight, food cravings, and coping. Choose an affirmative statement like: "I can cope with these cravings." Start with the "karate chop" part of your hand (the outer side along the edge) and tap the edge. Tap lightly but firmly with your index and middle finger, about five times. Focus on seven points of the body: eyebrow (by your nose), side of the eye, under the eye, under the nose, the chin, collarbone, and under the arm. State the problem and repeat the affirmation you picked aloud as you tap.

## 10. Keep Calm and Carry On.

Find a mantra. Repeat to yourself and take a deep breath. Imagine the air filling up a balloon in your stomach. Deep breathing calms down your fight-or-flight response quickly. The mantra rewires your brain to focus on positive thoughts.



*Dr. Susan Albers*  
**Eat, Drink & Be Mindful™**