



## Slimming Down Your Kitchen

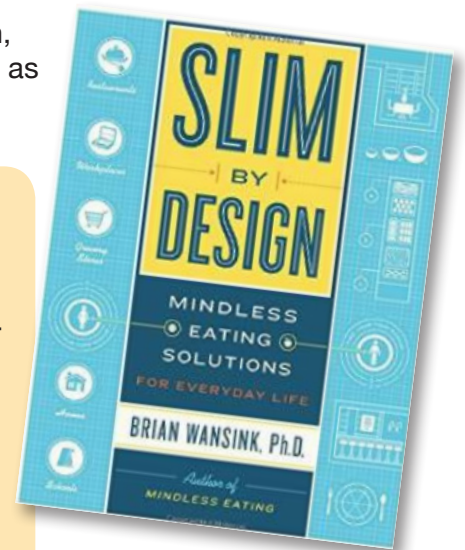
Stress in its many forms has been known to contribute to anxiety, which often leads to overeating. That's why creating a stress-free kitchen could help you eat less!

Research by Dr. Brian Wansink in his book *Slim By Design*<sup>1</sup> shows that when we slim down the clutter and rid unhealthy foods from our kitchen, it's easier to stick to our weight loss goals.

So let's get organized! When you feel more comfortable in your own kitchen, you're more likely to prepare meals at home, which can save money as well as cut down on your intake of sodium, sugar and fats.

### Food Storage and Kitchen Arrangement

- Start with a clean fridge. Remove food from your fridge and wash the interior shelves and sides with mild soap and warm water and dry with a clean towel. Organize your fridge by designating a shelf or drawer for meats and fish, and one for produce. Keep some prepared fruits and vegetables at eye level so you'll reach for them first. Store milk on an interior shelf rather than on the door (which fluctuates in temperature). Keep your eggs fresher and safer by storing them in the cartons they come in, rather than in refrigerator egg trays.
- Attack your cupboards next. Remove unhealthy foods to make space for more nutritious choices. (The best way to avoid the temptation of chips and cookies is to just keep them out of the house.)
- Keep similar products together, such as whole grains and cereals, or oils and vinegars. When items have designated places you'll be able to find them more readily. Invest in a few clear, sealable storage containers. You'll be able to see what you have in stock and they'll keep your foods clean and pest free.
- Stock your freezer with vegetables, fruits, fish and other go-to pantry staples. Frozen produce is just as nutritious as fresh and is perfect for stretching your food budget and inspiring last-minute meal ideas.
- Keep your kitchen table and counters free of clutter. You'll have fewer distractions and more space to prepare your meals; a clean table lets you sit down and enjoy what you created with friends and family.
- Keep a bowl of fruit on the table or counter. When fresh, colorful foods are front and center, you're more likely to choose them for a snack.



### Plates and Glassware

Switching out larger plates with smaller dishes (8 to 10 inches diameter) can help you feel fuller with less food, especially if you're in the habit of eating until your plate is empty.

The same is true with glassware. If a short, wide glass contains the same amount as a tall slim glass, our brain thinks we're consuming more with the tall one.



## Food Preparation

- Once you get your leafy green vegetables home from the grocery store, wash and dry them. To store, layer the leaves in paper towels and place in a sealable plastic bag or container. Wash, dry and chop carrots, peppers and celery and place in sealable containers. Having them already prepped makes cooking that much easier – and they're perfect for a quick salad or a grab-and-go snack.
- Make food preparation easier by keeping your cooking utensils and other frequently-used items nearby in a main drawer, cupboard, or on the counter near your stove so you can find them easily and quickly.
- Include your family in meal preparation. Children will learn important kitchen skills and you'll have more time to spend with them. An added benefit is that when children prepare their own food, they're more likely to enjoy healthier options.
- Eat at the table, but serve from the stove or counter. In another study by Dr. Wansink, he found that people ate 19% less food when they served their food from bowls on the counter or stove vs. bowls on the table. "People, especially guys, tend to serve themselves again and again when the food is right in front of them," says Dr. Wansink.

## Food Purchasing

- Keep your shopping list in a convenient place, such as a kitchen drawer or on your refrigerator door. When you use up an item, add it to your list and take the list with you as you head to the grocery store. Keeping a shopping list not only keeps you organized in the kitchen, it can also help you avoid impulse purchases that more often than not are high in calories, sodium or fat.



**With an organized kitchen filled with colorful and healthy foods, you'll be on your way to meet your weight-loss or maintenance goals.**

<sup>1</sup>Brian Wansink, PhD. John Dyson Professor of Marketing and the Director of the Cornell Food and Brand Lab in the Department of Applied Economics and Management at Cornell University in Ithaca, NY.

*Slim by Design*