Hey, fit fam. Nutrition coach Ellen here with you all again. On today's video, I'm going to talk about stress eating and overeating. I'm going to talk about what it is, why it's happening and solutions you can use to better overcome it.

So stress eating is when we are eating out of response to a feeling, especially when we're not hungry. And stress eating is also oftentimes called emotional eating and both emotional and stress eating mean that we are eating out of reaction to an emotion versus out of true hunger or our body's need to eat.

So what are some of the reasons that we experience stress eating? And oftentimes this goes back to feelings, feelings such as boredom, fear, sadness, anger, anxiety. And I think it's really important to talk about that right now as a society we are experiencing some higher anxiety, some higher worry than normal.

And we want to think about and talk about how are some of these feelings manifesting in our daily lives. And maybe you've noticed that you're home with the kids a little bit more often. Maybe it's easier to be picking up snacks here and there or some other snack foods that are out and around.

Maybe you've noticed that you're craving more comfort foods. Maybe you've noticed that you're craving more sweets and sugary or salty foods. And there's a reason for that guys and I want to talk about what's happening in our body when we're noticing some of these cravings and partaking in, or going to partake in stress eating.

So when we are stressed and our body is experiencing stress, it's actually releasing a hormone called cortisol. And cortisol is not our friend. Cortisol is the stress hormone and it's actually known as the stress hormone. And cortisol can actually lead to those feelings of cravings for high fat, high sugar and salty foods.

So your body when experiencing a cortisol release is preparing for a fight or flight response. So this is that stressful situation. It thinks that it needs to get ready to go to run, defend and fight or prepare for whatever is next.

So it is going to start craving some of these higher calorie dense and calorie dense foods in response to that to prepare your body. So that's actually what's happening when we're having stress and experiencing some of this stress.

And what we can do to counteract that is we actually have about a 10-minute window that we can really beneficially counteract stress and oxytocin, which I'm going to talk a little bit more on in a little bit, is our friend here. And oxytocin is the natural antidote to cortisol and experiencing stress.

So how can we get our body to produce and have more oxytocin? and I want to talk about that a little bit more in a minute here because I'm going to get into the solutions and what are some of those solutions that we can be doing to counteract stress and counteract stressed eating and that manifesting in our days and in our lives?

What we can do to produce more oxytocin in our bodies, we can actually get outside into nature. Yes. So being outdoors, experiencing the wind, the air, the hearing, the birds, water, rain, seeing plant and natural life. Those things increase the production of oxytocin in our bodies. Very, very cool.

So in the first 10 minutes of noticing some of this stress or feelings of stress coming on, cravings for some of these foods, sugary, sweet, and we feel that we might start partaking in stress eating. If you can get outdoors and get your body to start producing some of that oxytocin, you will help slow down that response.

And what are some other solutions that we can be doing to counteract stress eating? So the next thing I want to talk about is making a meal plan as a solution and having a plan set up for your day. When you go into your day and you have a plan, you're setting yourself up for success. So if we don't have a plan, we're planning to fail, right?

So what we need to do is think about what are we going to eat from morning, noon, and night before that day comes and is upon us that you know what you're going to have for breakfast, lunch, or dinner? You've got some snacks ready to go in the fridge, as easy as a little Greek yogurt cups and hummus cups with some veggies, whole grain crackers, and things like that.

But when we know in our minds and we have a plan for what we're going to eat and put into our bodies, it is that much easier to stay on track with our nutrition, guys. And so important when feelings of stress, anxiety and overwhelm are around and we're a little bit more susceptible to giving into some of those cravings. If we have a plan, we will be more successful. So that is one of the most important things you can do to be setting yourself up for success and counteract ,and avoid some of the stress eating in your life.

What are some other things that you can do? Mentally, the way that we think about eating and think about what we can control. So if we realize and recognize that a lot of the things going on in our lives, what other people are doing and saying what's happening in the world, we cannot control, but what we can control is the way that we react and we respond to the situation, right?

So choosing to set up that meal plan and plan your day and have a plan in place. Choosing to make time in your day to get outside to the exercise, to make sure we're getting in our water and setting your day up for success. That is 100% within our control.

Another helpful tool that you can be using to identify stress eating is asking yourself a really simple question and it's asking yourself before you eat, "Why am I having this? Is it because I'm truly hungry?" And if your answer is anything besides because I'm hungry or because I'm truly hungry, what that means is, is we need to find another activity that we can divert that energy and attention to.

And what are some of those things that you can be doing? And it could be as simple as getting outside with the kids, playing a game, finding a good book that you love and that you can immerse yourself into. Meditation, yoga, finding something else that you can enjoy and that you can go and do to avert your energy away from the food and away from that setting.

All right, guys. So let's recap. We talked about stress eating and what it is, it's eating out of response to emotion versus out of response to true hunger. We talked about stress and the response that it has in our bodies and how it can actually lead to cravings, lead to stress eating and overeating.

And we talked about oxytocin as being our friend and that hormone that can actually help stop and slow the stress response. We talked about solutions to stress eating and how we can help our bodies to produce more oxytocin by getting outside and getting ourselves in nature.

And that is it for today's nutrition video, guys. I hope that you enjoyed this. I had a lot of fun being here with you and have a great rest of your week.