

The quality of mindfulness is increasingly linked to effective self-regulation across a variety of domains including a number of health behaviors. An important behavior for health is eating behaviors, and mindfulness has been linked to healthier eating choices both in self-report, cross-sectional studies, and in laboratory eating paradigms. Along these lines, we sought to examine the links between trait mindfulness and eating behaviors measured over the course of several days (instead of cross-sectionally or in one sitting). At the same time, studying eating behaviors can be challenging because people may change their eating behavior when they are observed in an unnatural setting; likewise, self-report measures of general eating behaviors may not reflect individuals' actual eating behavior in their daily lives. In this ongoing study, we capitalize on this to assess college students' eating behaviors in a realistic and ecologically valid way. Specifically, we ask students to submit photographs of the food they are actually eating twice per day over the course of three days. We then code their individual food photographs for their health content and their aesthetic appeal. We hypothesize that individuals with high levels of trait mindfulness will display healthier eating habits through their own submitted photographs (which we call "food selfies"). Undergraduate students from a small southeastern university complete this study in two phases. In phase 1, participants are informed on the procedures of the study, and also complete a series of personality tests that include trait mindfulness. In phase 2, participants submit their "food selfies" and answer a few questions about each submitted photograph. At the end of phase 2, participants are sent a short survey, which includes questions about their adherence to study procedures. If our hypothesis is supported, we will be providing an innovative method for examining eating behaviors with the "food selfie" paradigm.