

# The Done Bingeing

PODCAST

## EPISODE 53: SPECIAL SERIES—12 KEYS TO END BINGE EATING, KEY #8: PRACTICE EPIC SELF-CARE

*What do a rope, a ring, and a ref have to do with your eating? Keep listening!*

Welcome to *The Done Bingeing Podcast*. This is the place to hear about how you can pair the emerging brain science about why you binge with powerful life coaching to help you stop. If you want to explore a non-clinical approach to end binge eating, you're in the right place. It's time to free yourself. You have more power than you know. And now, your host, Life and Weight-Loss Coach Martha Ayim.

Welcome to Episode 53 of *The Done Bingeing Podcast*.

It's official. It's our one-year anniversary. I'm still feeling the love. And I hope you are too.

It's an honor to spend time with you every week sharing the best of what I know about how to stop binge eating, compulsive eating, emotional eating, stress eating—you name it. And it's a privilege when you share with me how the podcast is changing your eating and changing your life.

While we're talking about love, this is the perfect time to switch to the eighth key in this special series: practice epic self-care.

Part of the reason we're talking about self-care, right on the heels of talking about hormones, is because there's another hormone that's important to consider in the mix. That hormone is called "cortisol"—the stress hormone.

With stress as a constant threat in our lives, self-care offers a crucial antidote. This episode talks about *why* you should take amazing care of yourself. The next episode talks about *how* to take amazing care of yourself.

Stress has many negative effects on your health, including on your blood sugar levels, mood, cognitive function, and sleep.

When you're stressed, your body secretes cortisol as well as glucagon, both of which affect your blood glucose levels (Schade & Eaton, 1980). From an evolutionary perspective, it makes sense that when you're stressed out and you enter fight-or-flight mode, your body releases glucose so your muscles have the energy they need to fight the proverbial saber-toothed tiger or run from it. But, today, as Dr. Joseph

Mercola explains, we're probably facing a threat that's more psychological than physical—so we don't need all that added glucose for energy after all (Mercola, 2018). And—from the last few of episodes on hormones—you already know where that spike in glucose will lead you: your body will produce more insulin to regulate the glucose in your blood.

In an excess of insulin, your hunger- and fullness-signaling hormones (ghrelin and leptin) no longer send clear signals about when you're hungry and when you're full. This isn't what you want if you're trying to stop bingeing, trying to lose weight, or trying to avoid or manage diabetes. But there's more. When you're stressed, blood glucose levels likely stay higher much longer than usual. The longer your blood glucose levels remain high, the more insulin your pancreas will secrete. And the risk is that, eventually, this leads to insulin insensitivity, or insulin resistance, and to the further breakdown of your fullness signaling via leptin (Mercola, 2018).

When cortisol is chronically elevated by ongoing stress—even at a low level—it can be harder to lose weight or build muscle and you'll be prone to storing fat around your middle, which plays a key role in the onset of diabetes. And if you're already diabetic, cortisol can make it more challenging to manage your blood glucose levels and leave you more vulnerable to making unhealthy choices that increase your risk even more (Lloyd, Smith, & Weinger, 2005).

That's one vicious cycle. But there's another one. When you're experiencing stress and the resulting rise in blood glucose levels, you can feel anxious or tired (Nall, 2017). Incomes insulin to try to decrease blood sugar, which can then set off cravings for high-sugar or highly concentrated comfort foods, which then lead to another surge in blood glucose, followed by another surge in insulin, and 'round we go again. With all of this going on, out-of-control emotional eating and weight gain aren't surprising consequences (Mosley, 2018).

Now, if that weren't enough, high blood sugar can impair cognitive function (Nall, 2017). And you already know from all the work we've done on the importance of managing your mind that, if you're not thinking clearly, you'll be at the mercy of difficult emotions that'll likely drive unhealthy actions and create unwanted results in your life.

Part of what's happening here is that stress makes it harder to get a good night's sleep, and research show links between insufficient sleep and weight gain, as well as cognitive and emotional dysregulation (O'Connor, 2013).

And now we have another vicious cycle: stress makes it harder get in your much-needed Zs and the less sleep you get, the more stressed you'll likely be.

Like stress, insufficient rest disrupts ghrelin and leptin. And it doesn't take much. A loss of 30 minutes of sleep per night throws these hunger- and fullness-signaling hormones off enough to cause weight gain. One study found that losing even a few hours of sleep for a few consecutive nights caused a two-pound weight gain on average (Markwald et al., 2013).

In fact, researchers have noticed that after even one night of sleep deprivation, our brains respond more strongly to high-calorie, sugary junk food.

The researchers discovered something else, too: a marked decrease in activity in the higher brain, where reasoning and decision making take place. In other words, our top-down control over our reactive lower brain is compromised by a poor night's sleep.

Brain scans showed that high-calorie foods after a restless night stimulated intense activity in the amygdala—a part of the brain that regulates emotions and desires (Walker, in O'Connor, 2013).

It's no wonder that many studies show that people of all ages tend to be more overweight the more under-slept they are (Cappuccio, et al., 2008).

So, sleep loss has a one-two punch. According to Dr. Matthew Walker, professor of psychology and neuroscience at the University of California, Berkeley, a tired brain seems more triggered by junk food but less able to think through how not to eat it. And, remember, that's on top of another jab and cross: the fact that poor sleep increases hormones that trigger hunger and decreases hormones that signal fullness (Walker, in O'Connor, 2013).

Now, if you're feeling like Rocky in his fight with Apollo Creed, I get it. And this where you might be inclined to say, "Forget it," and lie in the center of the ring, waiting for the ref, kneeling beside you, to count to ten.

But what if all this doesn't have to feel like a fight that you can't win? What if all the bingeing, then all the info on how to stop bingeing, doesn't have to drop you into overwhelm? That's where so many people go and why they reach out to me for help. And there is where you want a coach in your corner.

A different kind of coach.

Not a coach to count you out, but a coach to count you in.

Not a coach to throw you in the ring, but a coach to hold to ropes down so you can step beyond it.

A coach who's been in that ring, who's fought and fallen, who's lost and won.

A coach who knows the hot spotlights, where it seems a stadium is there to watch you break.

A coach who knows the coolness of the carpet to carry you to your dressing room then out into the sun.

There I stand, by the side of the ring, holding down the rope.

When you've had enough rounds, I'll usher you down. Down to the carpet and up to the exit. Up to where fake light turns to real light, up to where fake food turns to real food, and up to where thrashing in a bounded space turns to living in an unbounded one.

That's it for Episode 53. Thank you for listening! I want to give a huge shout out to Daniel my podcast editor. He's the reason these episodes come out in the shape that they do. If you're thinking of sharing

your wisdom with the world via a podcast, I couldn't recommend him more. You can reach him at [daniel@rothmedia.audio](mailto:daniel@rothmedia.audio), rothmedia.audio, or 901 300-0898.

If you're ready to apply the concepts that I teach in this podcast at a deeper level, get on the waitlist for the next Done Bingeing group experience. Go to <https://www.holdingthespace.co/group-programs/> and sign up for updates.

Thanks for listening to *The Done Bingeing Podcast*. Martha is a certified life and weight loss coach who's available to help you stop bingeing. Book a free session with her at [www.holdingthespace.co/book](http://www.holdingthespace.co/book). And stay tuned for next week's episode on freeing yourself from binge eating and creating the life you want.

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