

# Challenging Food Rules

If you are struggling with an eating disorder, it is likely that you have certain rules around the foods you can and can't eat. The eating disorder creates increased levels of anxiety, guilt and distress around these and they are often referred to as 'fear foods'.

You may also notice that your eating disorder has created a set of rules & conditions around your eating and dietary choices.




Having strict rules around food and eating can prevent an adequate nutritional intake, create a barrier to socialising and increase levels of guilt, distress and anxiety. It may also increase your preoccupation with the food you are denying yourself of, which may lead to binge eating or a loss of control around these foods.

Facing fear foods can be a very overwhelming prospect, however, it is a crucial part of eating disorder recovery and moving towards food freedom.

This worksheet, alongside support from your sessions, will help you to identify your own fear foods and food rules and gently encourage you to bravely face challenging these.



Use this page to make a list of foods you avoid a little (green), foods you avoid a lot (amber) and foods you avoid completely (red)



**Use this section to write about the set of rules and conditions your eating disorder requires you to follow around your food choices and eating behaviours.**

**What you eat** (e.g. type and amount of food)

**How you eat** (e.g. food prep, cutlery/utensil use, pace)



**Use this section to write about the set of rules and conditions your eating disorder requires you to follow around your food choices and eating behaviours.**

**When you eat** (e.g. meal timings)

**Where you eat** (e.g. environment, social eating)



## Use this section as a guideline for challenging your fear foods & rules

**Step 1:** Pick a fear food or rule from your list

.....  
.....

**Step 2:** Write out your prediction (what are you afraid will happen if you include this food or challenge this rule?)

.....  
.....  
.....

*How much do you believe this? (0-100%):*

**Step 3:** What will you do test out your prediction (think where, when, with who)

.....  
.....  
.....

*Time frame of when you want to have done this by:*

**Step 4:** Evaluate & reflect (what happened & what did you learn)

.....  
.....  
.....

*How much do you believe your prediction now? (0-100%):*

**Step 5:** Repeat (when & how will you challenge this again?)

.....  
.....  
.....



**Use this section as a guideline for challenging your fear foods & rules**

**Step 1:** Pick a fear food or rule from your list

.....  
.....

**Step 2:** Write out your prediction (what are you afraid will happen if you include this food or challenge this rule?)

.....  
.....  
.....

*How much do you believe this? (0-100%):*

**Step 3:** What will you do test out your prediction (think where, when, with who)

.....  
.....  
.....

*Time frame of when you want to have done this by:*

**Step 4:** Evaluate & reflect (what happened & what did you learn)

.....  
.....  
.....

*How much do you believe your prediction now? (0-100%):*

**Step 5:** Repeat (when & how will you challenge this again?)

.....  
.....  
.....



**Use this section as a guideline for challenging your fear foods & rules**

**Step 1:** Pick a fear food or rule from your list

.....  
.....

**Step 2:** Write out your prediction (what are you afraid will happen if you include this food or challenge this rule?)

.....  
.....  
.....

*How much do you believe this? (0-100%):*

**Step 3:** What will you do test out your prediction (think where, when, with who)

.....  
.....  
.....

*Time frame of when you want to have done this by:*

**Step 4:** Evaluate & reflect (what happened & what did you learn)

.....  
.....  
.....

*How much do you believe your prediction now? (0-100%):*

**Step 5:** Repeat (when & how will you challenge this again?)

.....  
.....  
.....