

A woman with long, dark brown hair and bangs is smiling warmly at the camera. She is wearing a white, sleeveless top with a mesh or crocheted texture. The background is a softly blurred indoor setting with warm lighting.

foodist

with **Darya Rose, Ph.D.**



Ask Darya: How Can I Exercise Harder Without Overeating?

The Foodist Podcast with Darya Rose, Ph.D.

I'm Darya Rose, and this is The Foodist podcast, where real people use real food to get healthy and lose weight without dieting.

Hey guys, it's Darya Rose, and welcome to another episode of [Ask Darya](#). Today we have a question from Leslie. Leslie asks, "Hey Darya, I have a question for you about that sentence you inserted regarding your exercise regimen." So, just to clarify, she's referring to the [For the Love of Food](#) post that I do on Friday where I briefly mentioned how much I exercise. She says, "I'm a healthy person who just wants to stay where I am weight-wise, but I'm working from mild to moderate/high exercise in order to increase my endurance and strength. My current challenge is balancing enough exercise so that I am making progress, but not so much that my body thinks I'm hungry all the time (Hello, Hungry Tiger). I know that I've read on your site that you are familiar with this phenomenon, that too much exercise can throw your hunger off balance, leading you to overeat. However, I read your weekly exercise description, which is four times a week strength training, two times high intensity interval training, and one time Pilates. And when I work out that much I get so, so hungry. I know everyone is different, but do you have any advice for how someone can discover some balance between the right amount of food and exercise?"

Thank you Leslie, this is a great question. I love that you are really zeroing in on a behavior that's very specific, identifying the problem around that, and trying to solve that. That's exactly how to tackle any sort of healthstyle difficulty you're experiencing. But I want to start by just clarifying a little bit about how exactly I exercise. In retrospect, reading this, with the four times a week strength training and interval training and Pilates...it sounds like I'm crazy, like I work out seven days a week, and I don't, actually. A lot of these things usually happen on the same day, and I only go to the gym between four, sometimes five, days a week. Usually four days a week, sometimes six sometimes three, but most of the times I say four days a week. When I go, one of those days is Pilates, and that's my easy day. I work out with my instructor. It's fairly straight forward, I don't do anything else that day. The others days I do 30 minutes of cardio, but two of those days I intentionally do interval training while I am doing cardio. That means I will intentionally get my heart rate up really high, and then back off for a little bit, and then go high again, just so I can really get my heart rate up, and it's really good for a lot of reasons—for health and endurance and all these things. So, I like to do that. After my cardio, I do some sort of fairly light weight strength training. I usually do two body parts in the weight room. Today, for example, I did shoulder presses and other shoulder workouts, and then biceps, and I usually do a little bit of ab work as well. So, it's nothing crazy. I'm in and out of the gym in under an hour, and I didn't want to give you the impression that I was working out like a maniac. I used to. I used to work out way too much. I used to do at least an hour of cardio, maybe more, and then do an entire weight circuit doing every body part in the weight room, and then a huge ab series. I was a total maniac, and I was starving. I do not recommend that at all. So, I just want to clarify that that's not what I am doing now, that now my exercise routine is great for me. Also, I'm very fit. I've been exercising my entire life. So, you're right, maybe it feels easy for me, but I've also been doing it forever. Right now it's a very moderate amount of exercise for me and it doesn't feel hard.



That said, you are dealing with a very real question. I want to start by saying that you need to understand that if you are intentionally trying to maintain your weight, and you are intentionally trying to build up endurance and strength training, you are going to need to eat more, and that's okay. You will be more hungry, and you will eat more. But that's not exactly what you're asking. I understand that. You're asking specifically how to not let that go out of control. You want to know how to not let a little hunger turn into monster hunger, because you're working out hard and your body sort of freaks out, and I've definitely experienced this. And it's a really good question. Essentially what you are going to need to do is eat more substantial snacks, and there's a few ways I can recommend you tackle this. First of all, you're going to be wanting to eat around your workout time. Everybody's different, some people like to eat before for energy, some people like to eat after. My stomach gets a little weird if I eat before, so I always eat after. But I know a lot of people who like to eat beforehand. Basically you're going to need to find snacks that are really satisfying and really nourishing and also healthy. What you don't want to do is eat the types of foods that you are able to binge on really easily. I believe it was Tim Ferris who coined the term "Domino Foods." These are foods where you can just sit and eat, and there's no way to stop. Nuts are a great example. If you have a big bag of nuts, it is so easy to plow through four, five, six hundred calories of nuts. Nuts are a healthy snack, and if you can separate an amount that you can stick with, then that's fine. But it's very easy if you just have an open bag of nuts to eat a lot and then not even notice it and have dinner afterwards like nothing happened. I can guarantee you there's no amount of exercise you're doing that is going to balance out 500 calories of nuts, unless you're doing really intense training. My advice is to find discrete snacks. Maybe you make a can of tuna salad, or you have some hard-boiled eggs, or whatever it is that works for you. Make them healthy and make them substantial. My guess is that if you can give your body the kind of nourishment it needs right around the time of the workout, that you will in fact be able to control yourself at dinner time and not just go crazy and order a giant pizza, eat the whole thing, and then have ice cream.

Good luck. It's a tough problem. What's interesting though, is keep in mind that you have the right attitude about it, which is that you need to figure it out for yourself, and you're in a good place. Even if you overshoot a little bit, and overeat a little bit; or undershoot a little bit, and you realize you're really hungry and you end up eating too much later into the night, you can correct it. You're not in a place where you are going to get really out of control. So, if you find that offer three weeks of a certain snack and it's not working and you're still overeating and you gain a couple pounds. You can adjust. You can go and add something else to that snack, or maybe add a second snack during the day and figure it out. What you want to do is be nourishing and discrete. I think that'll help you quite a bit.

Good luck, keep us posted please on how it goes, and thank you for your question.

Thanks for listening to The Foodist podcast. I'm Darya Rose, and if you're interested in upgrading your own healthstyle—learning how get healthy and lose weight, without dieting, and without all of the suffering that it brings—then head over to my website, [Summer Tomato](http://www.summertomato.com) and sign up for my weekly newsletter. When you sign up, you'll get a free starter kit that will teach you the basics of how to start changing the way you think about food, health, and weight-loss. You'll also get a free chapter from my book, [Foodist](#), called "The Myth of Willpower" that explains the science behind why the "No Pain, No Gain" mantra of the weight-loss industry is the absolute worst approach into getting healthy.



So come over the [Summer Tomato](#) and sign up. We have a fantastic community, and we would love, love, love, to have you. Thanks for listening, and I will see you next time.