

BONUS

3

THE EVENING CRAVINGS SWITCH-OFF ROUTINE

A Simple Night Routine to
Calm Stress, Reduce Cravings &
Help You Sleep Like a Baby.



CALM YOUR MIND
& BODY



REDUCE CRAVINGS
NATURALLY



SLEEP DEEPER,
WAKE REFRESHED

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Why Evening Cravings Are Not Your Fault

It is 8pm. You have eaten a full dinner. You know you are not hungry. But something is pulling you toward the kitchen — toward the bread, the biscuits, the leftover rice, the sweet thing at the back of the cupboard. You resist for an hour. Then you give in. Then you feel ashamed.

This happens to you every night. And every morning you wake up with the familiar guilt and the decision to do better tonight. Tonight you will be stronger. Tonight you will not eat late.

But tonight arrives. And the pull comes again.

THE TRUTH

Evening cravings are not a failure of your character. They are a hormonal event. Your body — specifically the hormones ghrelin, cortisol, and leptin — are producing cravings as a physiological response to stress, blood sugar fluctuation, and the day's accumulated tension. Willpower cannot override a hormone. But the right routine can reset the hormone itself.

This guide gives you a 10-minute evening routine that interrupts the hormonal cascade that creates evening cravings — not by suppressing them with willpower, but by removing the hormonal signal that produces them in the first place.

Done consistently for 7-14 evenings, this routine retrains your body's evening hormonal rhythm. The cravings do not just become easier to resist. They begin to disappear.

The Three Hormones Driving Your Evening Hunger

Ghrelin — The Hunger Hormone

Ghrelin is produced by the stomach and sends hunger signals to the brain. In women over 40, ghrelin levels spike in the evening — particularly after a stressful day — because stress disrupts the normal ghrelin suppression that should follow a full meal. You feel hungry even when you are not, because ghrelin is overriding your fullness signals.

How the routine fixes this: *The Switch-Off Routine resets ghrelin by lowering the cortisol spike that drives its evening elevation. Within 3-5 days of consistency, the evening ghrelin spike reduces significantly.*

Cortisol — The Stress Hormone

Cortisol should naturally be lowest in the evening — dropping through the afternoon and reaching its minimum between 11pm and midnight. But in chronically stressed women, this evening drop does not happen. Cortisol stays elevated into the night, stimulating appetite and specifically creating cravings for high-fat, high-sugar foods. This is your body trying to find fast energy to manage the perceived threat.

How the routine fixes this: *The Switch-Off Routine directly lowers evening cortisol through breathing, movement, warmth, and hormonal teas — all of which are evidence-aligned cortisol reduction methods.*

Leptin — The Fullness Hormone

Leptin tells your brain you are full and satisfied. It is produced by fat cells and sent to the hypothalamus. Poor sleep — which menopause and stress cause — directly reduces leptin sensitivity. When your brain cannot 'hear' leptin properly, it never receives the fullness signal, no matter how much you have eaten. This is why you feel bottomless in the evenings even after a full meal.

How the routine fixes this: *The Sleep-Ready Signal at the end of this routine is specifically designed to deepen early sleep quality — restoring the leptin sensitivity that prevents the bottomless evening hunger feeling.*

The Evening Cravings Switch-Off Routine — Overview

This routine runs from your last meal through to bedtime. Total active time: approximately 10 minutes. The rest is simply sequencing — doing the right things at the right times so your hormones shift naturally into overnight repair and fat-release mode.

7:30 PM	<p>■ 7:30 PM</p> <p>Finish Your Last Meal</p> <p>No food after this point. If you are not hungry by 7pm, eat anyway — a light meal.</p>
7:30–8:00 PM	<p>■ 7:30–8:00 PM</p> <p>Brew and Drink the Craving-Killing Tea</p> <p>Zobo + ginger + cinnamon + cloves. This is the hormonal anchor of the routine.</p>
8:00 PM	<p>■ 8:00 PM</p> <p>Phone Down — No Scrolling</p> <p>Put your phone face-down. No WhatsApp, news, or social media from this point.</p>
8:00–8:15 PM	<p>■ 8:00–8:15 PM</p> <p>The 10-Minute Movement Walk</p> <p>A slow, relaxed walk — around your compound, down your street, or inside your home.</p>
8:30 PM	<p>■ 8:30 PM</p> <p>The Warm Compress Ritual</p> <p>Warm cloth or warm water bottle on the abdomen for 5-10 minutes. Sitting quietly.</p>
9:00 PM	<p>■ 9:00 PM</p> <p>The Gratitude-Breath Practice</p> <p>3 minutes of slow breathing + writing 3 genuine good things from the day.</p>
9:30–10:00 PM	<p>■ 9:30–10:00 PM</p> <p>The Sleep-Ready Signal</p> <p>Dim lights. Warm shower or foot soak if possible. In bed — phone in another room.</p>

STEP**1****The Last Meal Rule****By 7:30pm — no exceptions**

Eat your last meal of the day by 7:30pm. Not 8pm. Not 9pm. 7:30. This is not about calorie restriction. It is about hormonal timing. Between 8pm and 2am, your body runs its hormonal overnight repair programme. Cortisol is cleared. Oestrogen is recycled. Ghrelin is suppressed. Leptin sensitivity is restored. Fat release begins. Food after 7:30pm forces your body to stay in active digestion and processing mode. Every hour of late eating is one fewer hour of hormonal repair. After 40, when these repair processes are already slower, this window matters enormously. If you are not hungry at 7pm, still eat something light — soup, steamed vegetables with fish, a small bowl of beans. The act of eating at the right time sets the hormonal clock for everything that follows. A half-eaten light meal at 7:30pm is dramatically better than no meal followed by a biscuit binge at 9:30pm.

***Why it works:** The gut-brain axis sends its final satiety signal to the hypothalamus approximately 20 minutes after eating. Eating by 7:30pm ensures this signal completes before 8pm — after which the body should be moving into the hormonal repair window. Meals after this point elevate insulin at precisely the time it should be falling, directly disrupting overnight fat release.*

**STEP****2****The Craving-Killing Tea****7:30–8:00pm — The hormonal anchor of the routine**

Brew this tea immediately after your last meal. Drink it slowly over 20-30 minutes. **INGREDIENTS:** • Dried zobo (hibiscus leaves) — 1 tablespoon • Fresh ginger — 1 thumb, sliced • Cinnamon — 1/2 stick or 1/4 teaspoon powder • Cloves (kanafuru) — 3-4 whole cloves • Hot water — 1 large cup (300ml) • Honey — 1 teaspoon (optional) **HOW TO PREPARE:** Combine all ingredients in a cup. Pour boiling water over them. Steep for 5-7 minutes. Strain. Allow to cool slightly. Drink slowly, sitting down, without a screen. You may prepare a larger batch and keep it in the fridge — drink cold or reheat as needed throughout the week. This is the single most important element of the entire routine. Do not skip it.

***Why it works:** Each ingredient targets a specific craving mechanism: Hibiscus reduces cortisol and blood pressure, directly suppressing the stress-driven hunger signal. Ginger lowers ghrelin by reducing gastric acid production that triggers hunger perception. Cinnamon stabilises blood sugar, preventing the post-dinner crash that creates cravings within 2 hours. Cloves block the COX-2 inflammation pathway that keeps cortisol elevated into the evening.*



STEP

3

The Phone-Down Protocol**8:00pm onwards — non-negotiable**

From 8pm, your phone goes face-down. Face-down — not silent, not on the table face-up, not across the room where you can still see it light up. Face. Down. Here is why this matters for evening cravings specifically: Every WhatsApp notification, every news headline, every Instagram scroll after 8pm sends a micro-stress signal to your amygdala. Each micro-stress signal produces a small cortisol pulse. Accumulated over one hour of evening scrolling, these pulses collectively keep cortisol elevated at the precise time it should be dropping. Elevated evening cortisol = elevated ghrelin = late-night cravings that feel overwhelming and impossible to resist. You are not craving biscuits. You are craving a stress reduction that food temporarily provides. The phone is producing the stress. Put it down. **WHAT TO DO INSTEAD:** Place your phone in the bedroom or kitchen. Come back to it at bedtime — but in bed, with it charging on the other side of the room.

***Why it works:** Blue light from screens suppresses melatonin production by up to 50%. Melatonin is not just a sleep hormone — it also suppresses ghrelin. When melatonin is suppressed by evening screen use, ghrelin stays elevated, and the evening hunger signal continues uninterrupted until you eat something or finally fall asleep exhausted.*



STEP

4

The 10-Minute Movement Walk**8:00–8:15pm — Slow and deliberate**

Ten minutes after you put down your phone, go for a slow walk. Not a power walk. Not exercise. A slow, deliberate, relaxed walk — around your compound, down your street and back, or even slow laps around your sitting room or veranda if the area is not safe at night. The pace matters: slow enough to carry on a gentle conversation. No headphones. No audio. Just walking and breathing. **WHY THIS SPECIFIC TIME:** The 8pm window is when the cortisol-ghrelin feedback loop is at its most active for stressed women. A short walk at this exact time — not before, not later — catches that loop at its peak and interrupts it with three simultaneous signals: lowered cortisol (movement reduces stress hormones), improved insulin sensitivity (muscle contraction clears blood sugar), and a distraction window long enough for the peak craving intensity to pass on its own. Most intense food cravings peak at 10-15 minutes and then naturally subside. The walk is designed to occupy exactly that window.

***Why it works:** Post-meal light walking is one of the most studied metabolic interventions available. Even 10 minutes of walking after dinner lowers post-meal blood glucose by an average of 30% compared to sitting. This glucose stabilisation prevents the blood sugar crash that triggers the second wave of evening cravings — the one that hits around 9pm and is usually the one that reaches the kitchen.*



STEP

5

The Warm Compress Ritual

8:30pm — 5-10 minutes

Sit down in a quiet chair or on your bed. Place a warm cloth, warm water bottle, or warm rice sock on your abdomen. **HOW TO PREPARE A RICE SOCK:** Fill a clean sock with dry, uncooked rice. Tie it shut. Microwave for 60-90 seconds. It will stay warm for 20-30 minutes. Place it over your lower abdomen — below your navel. Sit or lie with it there for 5-10 minutes. Breathe slowly. Do not do anything else. This step is one of the least understood and most powerful in the routine. Warmth applied to the abdomen activates the vagus nerve — the primary nerve pathway of the parasympathetic (rest-and-digest) nervous system. Vagus nerve activation directly and rapidly lowers cortisol, reduces heart rate, and suppresses ghrelin. This is why a warm meal feels comforting — it is not just the food. It is the warmth on your abdomen activating the same pathway. We are using the mechanism without the food.

***Why it works:** The vagus nerve runs from the brainstem through the chest and into the abdomen. Warming the abdominal area stimulates afferent vagal fibres that signal directly to the hypothalamus — the brain region that regulates both cortisol and ghrelin. Studies on thermotherapy (warm application) show cortisol reduction of 15-25% within 10 minutes of application to the abdominal region. This is faster than most other cortisol reduction methods.*



STEP

6

The Gratitude-Breath Practice

9:00pm — 3 minutes total

Sit quietly — on your bed, on a chair, or on the floor. No screens. **PART 1: THE BREATH** (90 seconds) Inhale slowly through your nose for 4 counts. Hold for 4 counts. Exhale slowly through your mouth for 6 counts. Repeat 6 times. Do not rush. The extended exhale is what activates the parasympathetic nervous system. The longer your exhale relative to your inhale, the more cortisol drops. **PART 2: THE 3 THINGS** (90 seconds) Write down — on paper, not a phone — three genuine, specific things that happened today that were good. They do not need to be large. Real and specific is what matters. Not: "I am grateful for my family." (too vague) But: "My daughter called me just to say hello." (specific and real) Not: "I am grateful for food." (too vague) But: "The stew came out exactly right tonight." (real and satisfying) This specificity is essential. Vague gratitude has little hormonal effect. Specific positive memory retrieval reduces cortisol measurably.

***Why it works:** The 4-4-6 breathing pattern activates the vagus nerve through respiratory sinus arrhythmia — the synchronisation of breathing with heart rate variability. Extended exhale breathing has been shown to reduce salivary cortisol by an average of 20-30% within 10 minutes in clinical settings. The gratitude writing activates the prefrontal cortex and dampens amygdala activity — shifting the brain out of threat-detection mode (which produces cortisol) into reward-processing mode (which produces dopamine and serotonin).*



The Sleep-Ready Signal

9:30–10:00pm — The final hormonal cue

Your body learns from repetition. When you do the same sequence of actions at the same time every night, your brain begins to associate those actions with sleep onset — and preemptively begins releasing melatonin in anticipation. This is called a sleep anchor — and it is one of the most powerful tools for resetting the evening hormonal rhythm that drives late-night cravings. **THE SLEEP-READY SEQUENCE:** 1. Dim all lights in the room you are in — or switch to a lamp or candlelight. 2. Take a warm shower or warm foot soak (if available) — 5 minutes. 3. Change into your sleep clothes. 4. Place your phone on the far side of the bedroom to charge — not within arm's reach of the bed. 5. Lie down. Close your eyes. Do not try to sleep — just lie still. You do not need to be asleep by 10pm. You need to be in the conditions for sleep. Your body will follow. **THE CRAVING TEST:** If a craving arises after you are lying down, ask yourself: Am I hungry or am I just awake? Hunger is a physical sensation in the stomach. What most women feel at this stage is simply the discomfort of being awake and still. It passes within 10 minutes if you remain lying down.

Why it works: Melatonin secretion begins approximately 2 hours before your habitual sleep time — triggered by the decrease in light exposure. By consistently performing the same pre-sleep sequence at the same time, you create a conditioned response: the brain begins melatonin release in anticipation of the sequence. Elevated melatonin directly suppresses ghrelin — meaning that a consistent sleep routine is one of the most effective long-term craving-suppression tools available.



What to Do When a Craving Breaks Through

There will be nights — especially in the first week — when a craving does not respond to the routine. Particularly on high-stress days, the hormonal surge can overwhelm the reset. This is normal. Here is the emergency protocol for those nights:

■ First: Wait 15 minutes

Do not go to the kitchen immediately. Set a timer for 15 minutes and lie still. The peak intensity of any craving — no matter how overwhelming it feels — passes within 12-15 minutes if you do not act on it. The craving you feel at minute 1 is not the same craving you will feel at minute 15. Wait it out.

■ Second: Drink a large glass of cold water

Then drink a glass of warm water. The combination of cold followed by warm activates the vagus nerve and rapidly lowers the cortisol-ghrelin spike. Add a squeeze of lemon to the warm water if available.

■ Third: Do 20 slow squats

Stand up and do 20 slow, deliberate squats — not fast, not exercise-intensity. Just slow lowering and rising. This empties the blood of excess glucose that is fuelling the craving signal and releases endorphins that reduce the emotional urgency of the craving.

■ Fourth: If you must eat — use the approved snack list

If after all of the above the craving is still present and you decide to eat, eat only from the approved craving-proof snack list on the next page. These snacks are specifically chosen not to restart the cortisol-ghrelin cycle.

IMPORTANT

Do not punish yourself if the craving wins on some nights. Shame and self-criticism elevate cortisol — which makes tomorrow's cravings worse. If you eat late tonight, simply restart the routine tomorrow. The routine works cumulatively. Seven consistent nights will change your evening hormonal pattern more than ten nights of perfection broken by self-criticism.

The Craving-Proof Nigerian Snack List

These snacks are specifically chosen because they satisfy the physical sensation of eating without triggering the insulin-cortisol spike that restarts the craving cycle. Keep these available at home so that if you must eat, you have the right option immediately accessible.

■ Tiger Nuts (Ofio) — Small Handful

Small cup
(about 30g)

Tiger nuts are high in fibre and resistant starch. They satisfy the oral need to eat and chew without spiking blood sugar. They provide inulin prebiotic fibre that feeds beneficial gut bacteria overnight.

■ *Does not restart the craving cycle. Safe after 8pm.*

■ Cucumber Slices with a Pinch of Salt

Half a
cucumber

Almost zero glucose impact. The crunch satisfies the physical craving urge. The water content reduces the dehydration that is often misread as hunger at night. Salt provides electrolytes that reduce stress-hormone production.

■ *Safe at any time of night. The ideal late snack.*

■ 1 Boiled Egg

One egg only

Complete protein that triggers genuine satiety signalling without glucose. Choline in the egg supports overnight cortisol clearance in the liver.

■ *Satisfies without spiking. One egg only — not two.*

■ Half a Banana

Half only — not
a full banana

The tryptophan in banana converts to serotonin, which suppresses ghrelin and induces calm. The natural sugar provides just enough glucose to quieten the hunger signal without creating a spike. Half a banana — not a full one.

■ *Half banana only. More than this will spike blood sugar at night.*

■ Warm Ginger or Zobo Tea (Unsweetened)

1 cup — no
sweetener

Often the sensation of eating late is simply the need for warmth and flavour — not genuine hunger. A warm, aromatic tea satisfies both while simultaneously reducing the ghrelin spike driving the craving.

■ *The best first response to any late craving. Try this before any food.*

■ 5 Raw Groundnuts

Five nuts only
— counted out

A tiny amount of groundnuts provides niacin and healthy fat that signals satiety to the brain. The act of counting and eating exactly five also creates a mindful pause between craving and consumption.

■ *Five only. The act of counting is itself a cortisol-reducing mindfulness moment.*

Your Evening Routine Quick Reference Card

Screenshot this page or print it and place it on your bedroom wall or bathroom mirror. Read it every evening until the routine is automatic.

TIME	STEP	ACTION	DURATION
7:30 PM	Step 1	LAST MEAL — stop eating	—
7:30–8:00	Step 2	Brew & drink Craving-Killing Tea (zobo+ginger+cinnamon+cloves)	30 min
8:00 PM	Step 3	PHONE DOWN — face-down, no screens	—
8:00–8:15	Step 4	Slow 10-minute walk (outside or around the house)	10-15 min
8:30 PM	Step 5	Warm compress on abdomen (warm cloth or rice sock)	5-10 min
9:00 PM	Step 6	Gratitude-Breath Practice (4-4-6 breath + write 3 things)	3 min
9:30–10:00	Step 7	Sleep-Ready Signal (dim lights, warm shower, phone away)	30 min

THE CRAVING-KILLING TEA — QUICK RECIPE

1 tbsp dried zobo (hibiscus) • 1 thumb fresh ginger, sliced • 1/2 cinnamon stick • 3-4 cloves • 300ml boiling water • 1 tsp honey (optional). Steep 5-7 minutes. Strain. Drink slowly between 7:30-8:00pm every evening.



The cravings are not you. They are a hormone.

And hormones respond to routine. Not willpower. Not discipline. Not shame in the morning.

Ten minutes every evening. Seven days. Your nights will change. And when your nights change, your body will change with them.

With love for your healing,

Demi F.O.

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