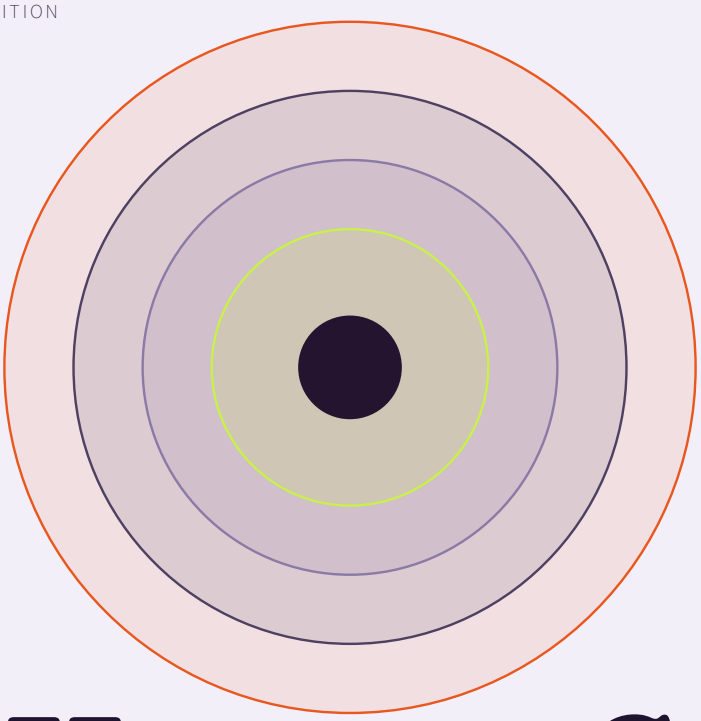


The Hunger Code: Resetting Your Body's Fat Thermostat in the Age of Ultra-Processed Food

A reading of the book by Jason Fung (2026)

1. ACTION BOOK

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ABOUT THIS EDITION

This is HourLife's reading of The Hunger Code: Resetting Your Body's Fat Thermostat in the Age of Ultra-Processed Food, in our own words. It is not a substitute for the book.

BEFORE YOU START 01

The book in a minute

Jason Fung is a Toronto kidney specialist best known for The Obesity Code and his work on intermittent fasting. The Hunger Code is his follow-up, and it moves the question from what and when you eat to why you feel hungry in the first place. He argues that the body defends a fat set point, a thermostat run by hormones such as insulin, and that ultra-processed food and constant eating push the setting up. He sorts hunger into three kinds, homeostatic, hedonic and conditioned, and answers them with three golden rules: avoid ultra-processed food, build in a regular fasting period, and redesign your surroundings and social habits. Around those rules he sets dozens of short practical tips, and he draws on research into hunger hormones and on the new weight-loss drugs such as Ozempic.

Below are the 9 ideas HourLife readers vote up most, each in our words with a note on what it asks of you, and then the steps that put them to work.

WHAT READERS KEEP

The takeaways

1

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Hunger, not willpower, decides how much you eat, so a diet that leaves you hungry is built to fail.

Fung's starting point is that cutting food without dealing with hunger tends to make hunger louder, and most people regain what they lose. He frames this book as the sequel to The Obesity Code, with hunger itself as the thing to fix.

2

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Your body defends a fat set point the way a thermostat defends the temperature of a room.

Eat less and the body can push back with more hunger and less energy spent. Fung's aim is to lower the setting rather than fight it every day. Most researchers agree the body defends its weight to some degree, but how fixed that set point is remains debated.

3

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

There are three hungers, homeostatic, hedonic and conditioned, and each one needs a different answer.

Homeostatic hunger is the body's need, run by hormones. Hedonic hunger is eating for pleasure or comfort. Conditioned hunger is set off by places, times and people. Treating all three as one problem is why a single rule rarely holds.

4

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Two foods with the same calories can send opposite signals: one says store, the other says stop.

Fung contrasts cookies, which push insulin up and favour fat storage, with eggs, which raise fullness hormones such as GLP-1. In his view the hormone response matters more than the calorie count. That is his position; many nutrition researchers still treat calories as the main lever.

5

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Ultra-processed food feeds more than one hunger at once, which is why it is so hard to stop eating.

It is less filling, built to taste good, cheap and everywhere. That is why avoiding it is the first of Fung's three golden rules. Researchers broadly agree these foods make overeating easier, even where they argue about why.

6

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

A daily stretch without food gives insulin time to fall and the body time to use what it has stored.

A regular fasting period is the second golden rule. It can be as plain as not eating after an evening hour, or not eating in front of the TV. Anyone taking medicine for diabetes or blood pressure should plan this with a clinician first, because doses may need to change.

7

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Conditioned hunger is learned, so you can unlearn it by changing the cue.

The cinema, the office snack table, the game on TV: none of them make the body need food, yet they reliably start the urge. Fung's third golden rule is to redesign your surroundings and your social habits so the cue stops firing.

8

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Stress and short sleep raise cortisol, and cortisol raises physical hunger.

Fung counts cortisol among the hormones behind homeostatic hunger. So some of the fixes for appetite are not about food at all: a late night or a hard week can show up as hunger the next day.

9

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Drugs like Ozempic work by quieting hunger, which suggests hunger was the problem all along.

Fung's point is that weight tends to return when the drug stops, because the hunger signals come back. The book covers keeping weight steady after a fast or after coming off these drugs. Starting, stopping or tapering any medicine is a decision to make with your prescriber.

PUT IT TO WORK

Your action book

Do the setup steps once, then keep the habits going. The setup changes your week; the habits keep it changed after the first good one.

The download puts this whole reading and a printable action book in one PDF: the setup checklist, then a page of real calendar days for each habit, starting on the day you choose.

SET UP ONCE

- [ ] Keep a three-day hunger log
- [ ] Swap your three most-bought packaged foods
- [ ] Set a kitchen-closed time
- [ ] Move the cues out of sight
- [ ] Write down a default first meal

KEEP UP DAILY

- ◯ Eat protein and vegetables first
- ◯ Name the hunger before you feed it
- ◯ Guard your sleep on weeknights

30 days · Nov 6 - Dec 5, 2026

Part two, after the reading, prints each of these as a page to fill in by hand.

THE LAST WORD

Before you go

Pick one step from the action book and do it today. An idea from a book starts to count once it changes what one ordinary day looks like.

PART TWO

The action book

Change the setup once, then keep it up. 5 setup actions to do once, and 3 habits to mark each day for 30 days.

Nov 6 - Dec 5, 2026

Print it, or write on it in any PDF app.

SET UP ONCE

The setup checklist

Each of these is done once. Do one a day, and check it off when it is done.

☐ SETUP 1

Keep a three-day hunger log

Each time you want to eat outside a meal, note the time, where you are, and which hunger it feels like: body, pleasure or cue.

The hunger check on this page keeps the tally for you.

MY VERSION _____ DONE ON _____

☐ SETUP 2

Swap your three most-bought packaged foods

Look at your last grocery receipt and circle the three ultra-processed items you buy most often.

Pick a whole-food stand-in for each and buy that instead this week.

MY VERSION _____ DONE ON _____

☐ SETUP 3

Set a kitchen-closed time

Choose an evening hour after which you don't eat, and tell the people you live with.

If you take insulin or other diabetes medicine, agree any fasting window with your clinician before you start.

MY VERSION _____ DONE ON _____

☐ SETUP 4

Move the cues out of sight

Put snacks in an opaque tin on a high shelf, clear the desk drawer, and leave the counter bare.

Food you can't see starts fewer conditioned urges.

MY VERSION _____ DONE ON _____

☐ SETUP 5

Write down a default first meal

Pick one first meal built on protein and fibre, such as eggs with vegetables or beans on wholegrain toast.

Write it on the fridge so the morning needs no decision.

MY VERSION _____ DONE ON _____

DAILY HABIT 1 OF 3

Eat protein and vegetables first

At each meal, start with the protein and the vegetables.

Nov 6 - Dec 5, 2026 · 30 days · circle each day you do it

SMALLEST VERSION

CUE

WHERE

November 2026

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
						1
2	3	4	5	6 ○	7 ○	8 ○
9 ○	10 ○	11 ○	12 ○	13 ○	14 ○	15 ○
16 ○	17 ○	18 ○	19 ○	20 ○	21 ○	22 ○
23 ○	24 ○	25 ○	26 ○	27 ○	28 ○	29 ○
30 ○						

December 2026

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
	1 ○	2 ○	3 ○	4 ○	5 ○	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

EACH FRIDAY

WHAT HELPED

WHAT GOT IN THE WAY

ONE CHANGE TO THE SETUP

DAILY HABIT 2 OF 3

Name the hunger before you feed it

Before any unplanned snack, wait ten minutes and name which of the three hungers it is.

Nov 6 - Dec 5, 2026 · 30 days · circle each day you do it

SMALLEST VERSION

CUE

WHERE

November 2026

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
						1
2	3	4	5	6 ○	7 ○	8 ○
9 ○	10 ○	11 ○	12 ○	13 ○	14 ○	15 ○
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EACH FRIDAY

WHAT HELPED

WHAT GOT IN THE WAY

ONE CHANGE TO THE SETUP

DAILY HABIT 3 OF 3

Guard your sleep on weeknights

Keep one fixed bedtime from Monday to Thursday.

Nov 6 - Dec 5, 2026 · 30 days · circle each day you do it

SMALLEST VERSION

CUE

WHERE

November 2026

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
						1
2	3	4	5	6 ○	7 ○	8 ○
9 ○	10 ○	11 ○	12 ○	13 ○	14 ○	15 ○
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December 2026

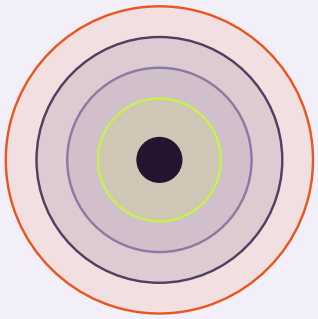
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14	15	16	17	18	19	20
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28	29	30	31			

EACH FRIDAY

WHAT HELPED

WHAT GOT IN THE WAY

ONE CHANGE TO THE SETUP



Stop arguing with your hunger. Find out which kind it is, and turn the dial down instead.

HOURLIFE NOTE AFTER JASON FUNG