

# How to break bad diet habits for good

Changing how you think about food is all in the mind, says life coach **JANET THOMSON**

**W**HEN it comes to how we eat, humans are creatures of habit and many of our habits – especially our bad ones – are created without us realising. If you want to break a bad habit the key is to know what triggered it in the first place.

There are three steps through which a habit is created. The first is the cue. This is something that triggers a particular automatic behaviour.

In smokers it may be always having a cigarette with the first coffee of the day. Or it may be that when you hear the theme tune of your favourite TV show you automatically put the kettle on and settle down with a cup of tea and a biscuit. Cues come in many forms, from a particular time of day to a smell.

The next step is the behaviour. This is what you do in response to a cue, for example ordering a slice of cake with

your coffee. The third is the reward, which associates pleasure with the behaviour. A reward may be an emotion, feeling or a taste – savouring the chocolate icing for example. This confirms in your mind that you made the right choice.

Follow our expert tips and banish your bad habits for good.

## **KNOW YOUR CUES**

It might seem impossible to break a habit if you are constantly exposed to the same cues. Luckily it is possible to change your response to the cue. You may not be able to remove a vending machine from your office – but you can change your reaction to it.

The following exercise will help you to identify your cues and create new responses to them.

List all the foods that have made you