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MINDFULNESS & ADAPTIVE COOKING TECHNIQUES



Approaching cooking with an attitude of mindfulness—cultivating a sense of heightened awareness and being fully present for what is required to make a meal—supports the visually impaired cook in being not only safer in the kitchen, but also has the added benefit of deepening their pleasure and allowing for a richer sensory experience.

Where is your mind when you are cooking? Are you distracted by other things? Cooking is a great opportunity to **be completely in the moment during each step** of the process and to raise your awareness about the sensory experience of each ingredient needed to compose a dish.

Even washing your hands before you begin to prepare food is a great opportunity to become more centered and mindful. Notice the temperature of the water as it streams out of the tap. The sound it makes, the scent and texture of soap you may be using. The softness, or roughness, of the towel you use to dry your hands.

Before you even begin to organize your *mise en place*— a French culinary phrase which means “putting in place”—**take a few deep breaths and let any distractions recede**. When you start to assemble your ingredients and tools, become fully aware of where you are placing them. Is your work space clear and well lit? Have you created greater contrast so that you are better able to find them?

Notice the textures and aromas of the foods you will be measuring; the weight, and even the different temperatures of each component and implement.

Becoming more familiar with the subtle differences between ingredients allows for greater confidence. Salt and sugar may look alike but are the granulations exactly the same? Is corn starch silkier than flour?

Can you detect the change in smell when oil begins to heat up in a skillet? The sizzle water makes when it hits a hot surface?

By employing the other senses one’s pleasure deepens. When you go to sit down to eat, take your time and notice the flavor and texture of each bite. Even connecting to the source of each ingredient—thinking about the earth that a rosette of lettuce may have been pulled from, the water and sunlight used to nourish its growth has the potential to support mindfulness in the kitchen.