



Nutrition

Banana Bonanza

Nutrition and healthy eating contribute to maintaining bodily structure and processes. It provides us with energy, cognitive abilities and can protect us from disease and illness (1). As we age, we begin to change in a way we buy, prepare, and eat food to maintain a healthy diet. Limitations in one's ability to eat or prepare food can lead to poor health. In this simulation you will experience how difficulties in handling food might change our willingness to eat healthily; or to eat at all. The goal is to increase your understanding on how simple everyday tasks, such as eating or preparing food, can become seemingly impossible for older adults, and this can have cascading negative health consequences. Here, you will experience difficulties in cutting, using utensils, and manoeuvring food on the plate, if you were affected by osteoarthritis which causes pain and stiffness. Please note that cutting foods into smaller pieces helps better chewing before swallowing and prevents choking.

Materials

- 1 plate
- 1 fork
- 1 butter knife. To increase difficulty, use larger utensils such as a butcher knife or a serving fork
- 1 banana (unpeeled)

Procedure

1. Complete the precursor stations if you have not already done so.
2. Set up a spot at a table with a plate, fork, knife, and an unpeeled banana on the plate.
3. **Take the knife** with your non-dominant hand.
4. Cut the banana into equal 1-inch pieces using the fork and knife.
5. Peel the skin off the banana using the fork and knife.
6. Attempt to eat the banana pieces using the fork.

Reflection Questions

1. Would you feel more OR less inclined to eat healthy or prepare food if you had to deal with the struggles you experienced in this simulation?
2. At what point during the simulation did you consider giving up or not wanting to eat banana? How would giving up impact your nutrition over time?
3. Although in this simulation we used utensils, many cultures eat with their hands. Would elderly persons of different cultural backgrounds experience more, less or same barriers in good nutrition as they age?