

## Simple Ways to Plan and Prepare Meals Even When You're Busy



You want to eat healthier, but you're super-busy.

You eat out several times a week because that's what you have to do. That's what works for you and your family (when it comes to time and convenience).

But you probably realize it's not working great when it comes to your health and fitness goals.

You want better health. You want to eat better. You don't want the extra calories, fast food and junk food as much anymore. And you DO want to save time and money.

I get it!

So, as a health coach, I am here to help you.

I have a simple strategy that I'm more than happy to share with you. It will help you to plan and prepare healthy meals for the week.

Now, you don't need to completely abandon your regular meals out. You can use my strategy to help you eat out just one or two fewer times per week. It's up to you.

As with any lifestyle change, start gradually so you can build consistency. The key here is to make it easy, doable and rewarding enough to do again and again.

Let me walk you through my simple meal prep system, and how this can work for you.

## **PLAN MEALS FOR THE WEEK**

I prefer to do this on the weekend. I'll flip through my recipes and choose a bunch to make that week. I'll even pick which days to have which meals if I'm feeling overly ambitious, but that's not necessary if you're new to this. I'll bookmark the pages and write my chosen recipes down in a notebook or even a sheet of paper to put on my fridge. I like to have at least one crock pot meal each week because they're so easy, and dinner is ready and waiting when you get home.

Then I create my grocery list. I take a quick look in my fridge, freezer and pantry, and list the recipe ingredients that I need to buy.

Pro Tip: If you're not sure you have enough of an ingredient already, consider buying a "backup" one just in case. I've had times where the tomato sauce I planned to use was a bit short of what I actually needed. Having to run out in the middle of meal prep can be very frustrating.

Another thing to consider is doubling the recipe(s), so you can prep and cook once, but have twice the meal at the end. The extras can be taken for lunch, or frozen to pull out the night before a busy day, so you just need to heat it up when you're ready.

Pro Tip: If you're doubling a recipe, don't forget to double the amount you buy from the grocery store.

Once you have your handy-dandy grocery list ready, hop on over to the store and pick up your essentials. If you don't have enough food storage containers for your meals, now's the time to pick up some of those too.

Pro Tip: If you're not a fan of washing and chopping produce, then consider buying them already pre-washed and pre-chopped, or even frozen. You can make your meal prep even easier if you don't mind spending a couple of extra dollars.

## **PREPARE MEALS FOR THE WEEK**

Since you've already chosen your recipes and have your groceries, let's get started on prepping some of the ingredients.

I like to book off 2-3 hours one afternoon for this. Get your recipes ready, clear off your counter, and play some music (if you're so inclined).

At this point, depending on time, I'll either prep the ingredients, or pre-cook the entire recipe. Sometimes just washing and chopping produce and putting it in containers is a huge time-saver for weeknights. Or, you can go through and make a whole meal, and divide it up into portions and refrigerate or freeze. It's really up to you, because the more you do now, the less you'll have to do when you're hungry.

## **AWESOME MEAL PREP TIP**

There is one meal that is easiest to plan and prepare in advance. It's one that's also often the most difficult to eat at home if you're busy.

That's breakfast.

Planning some overnight oatmeal is a great start to any day. Simply place ½ cup rolled oats, ½ cup your choice of milk, 1 tbsp chia or flax seeds into a container (or make 5 for the whole week). Then place the lid on, shake them up and put them in your fridge. In the morning you can quickly heat them up or even eat them cold (the oats will have absorbed

the milk). Top with berries, chopped fruit, nuts or seeds and enjoy.

With a little planning, you'll be able to eat healthier while you save money and calories.

This may take some getting used to, so if I can be of help, please reach out and let me know.

