

SEPTEMBER

meal prep



Meal prepping is an easy way to save time and money when it comes to cooking during the week. It also ensures that we are eating healthy meals instead of grabbing food on the go with questionable ingredients.

We all know that feeling when we come home from work and have to start preparing a large meal almost instantly. Cooking with fresh ingredients can take a little more time if we don't have some or the majority of our meals planned and prepped ahead of time.

This newsletter focuses on ways that can save your sanity, time and money - while also making sure that you're fueling yourself with quality nutrition.

Take a look!

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THE BASICS + HELPFUL ITEMS

» ORGANIZATION

Clean up your kitchen, de-clutter, get to know where things are, and make a space for all items. Having a clean kitchen will make you want to spend more time there and will clear your mind.

» FAMILIAR RECIPES

Whether you are just learning the basics of meal prepping or have been doing this for years, there's really no need to get fancy with multi-step recipes. Familiar, easy, nourishing meals help to decrease stress levels.

» CONTAINERS

Start out by using what you have. You can even re-use glass containers from other food items. For example, I re-use an old sauerkraut jar with a screw-on lid for overnight oats and chia pudding.

» INSULATED LUNCH BAG

Having a cold container to store your food in is necessary if you take your meals to work and do not have a refrigerator available. You can find high-quality and reasonably priced ones on Amazon.



Pictured above:

- 'Le Parfait' jars (Amazon)
- Glass tupperware w/ leak-proff snap-on lids (Amazon)
- 'Pack It' Insulated Lunch Bag (Amazon or WalMart)
- 'Stasher' silicone reusable baggies (Amazon)
- 'Flip & Tumble' reusable produce bags (Amazon)

BEFORE YOU START COOKING

1 KEEP IT SIMPLE

Begin with one, simple meal that you are familiar with cooking. If you are a beginner and feel overwhelmed at the thought of prepping 5 days worth of one meal, start with prepping for 3 days.

2 PICK A DAY + SCHEDULE IT

Pick the most convenient day to grocery shop and meal prep. Sunday and Wednesday are the most popular for people. Schedule meal prepping into you calendar, planner, and/or phone and try your hardest to stick to it.



3 CHOOSE DEPENDABLE RECIPES

Cook a recipe you're familiar with and one that will be easy, and non-stressful.

4 TAKE INVENTORY

Go through you fridge, freezer, and pantry. Look at the ingredients you have so far and try to build a recipe with them. If you need anything extra, then create a grocery list and go to the store. This saves you some time and money.



4 HAVE FUN!

Put some music on, listen to a podcast, dance a little in the kitchen, drink some hot tea, latte, or maybe some wine? Make meal-prepping something that you enjoy, not another chore on your to-do list.



Which meal do I try to prep first?

Start prepping the meal that gives you the most difficulty. Start with the meal you're constantly skipping or eating something fast and unhealthy for the sake of convenience and just to curb your hunger.

Are you always skipping breakfast because you wake up and you're rushing out the door? Or maybe you don't get an actual lunch break, so you're grabbing something packaged out of the vending machine.

Start with that meal - whatever one gives you the most grief. Once you feel confident with that, start by adding in the other two (breakfast, lunch or dinner) to your meal prepping schedule.



MEAL PREP COOKING STRATEGIES

BATCH COOKING

Cook up a big batch of something like stew, soup, whole roast chicken, and enjoy that throughout the week. You can also freeze some for future meals when you're super short on time.

PORTIONS

You can portion out an entire meal or just a component. For example, an entire day's lunch in one container, mixed berries in a smaller container, mixed nuts in another container - all ready to grab and go when you need.

ASSEMBLE INGREDIENTS; DON'T COOK

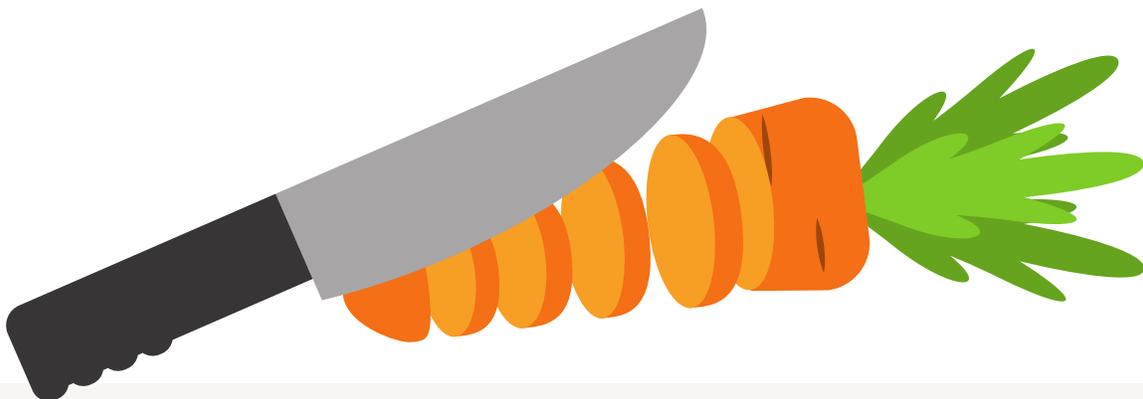
Chop up ingredients, put into a big container and when you're ready, pour into a crock pot, instant pot or pot on the stove to cook. You can store the containers of chopped veggies in the fridge if using that same week, or in the freezer if you are storing for longer-term. This is good for dinners during the week when you have limited time to prep food.

BUFFET-STYLE

Prepping veggies, carbs, and protein separately, and tossing together during the week for easy meals.

PRE-COOKED MEALS

Make different whole meals and refrigerate and/or freeze to grab later on, re-heat if necessary, and enjoy! Examples: soups, stews, stir-fry's, curries, jar salad, overnight oats, chia pudding.





FOOD PREP SAFETY TIPS



4 STEPS OF THE FOOD SAFE FAMILIES CAMPAIGN:

- **CLEAN** -- Wash hands and surfaces often.
- **SEPARATE** -- Don't cross contaminate.
- **COOK** -- Cook to the right temperature.
- **CHILL** -- Refrigerate properly.

STORAGE

- Refrigerate perishable food within 2 hours—1 hour when the temperature is above 90 °F
- Check the temp of your refrigerator & freezer with an appliance thermometer. Refrigerators should be at 40 °F or below and freezers at 0 °F or below.
- Cook or freeze fresh poultry, fish, ground meats, and variety meats within 2 days; other beef, veal, lamb, or pork, within 3 to 5 days.

THAWING

- **REFRIGERATOR:** The refrigerator allows slow, safe thawing. Make sure thawing meat and poultry juices do not drip onto other food.
- **COLD WATER:** For faster thawing, place food in a leak-proof plastic bag. Submerge in cold tap water. Change the water every 30 minutes. Cook immediately after thawing.
- **MICROWAVE:** Cook meat and poultry immediately after microwave thawing.

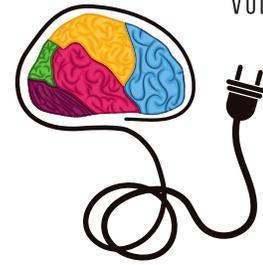
PREPARATION

- Always wash hands with warm water and soap for 20 seconds before and after handling food.
- Don't cross-contaminate. Keep raw meat, poultry, fish, and their juices away from other food. After cutting raw meats, wash cutting board, utensils, and countertops with hot, soapy water.
- Marinate meat and poultry in a covered dish in the refrigerator.

COOKING

- Cook all raw beef, pork, lamb and veal steaks, chops, and roasts to a min internal temperature of 145 °F (using food thermometer) before removing meat from heat source. For safety and quality, allow meat to rest for at least 3 minutes before carving or consuming.
- Ground meat: 160 °F
- Poultry: 165 °F

BRAIN POWER



WHAT IS MINDFULNESS?

Mindfulness means being consciously aware of what is happening inside of us and around us in the present moment.

It also means being accepting of what we experience without picking or choosing, without judging right or wrong, good or bad. In meditative traditions, mindfulness is a method used to obtain insight, which means seeing things as they really are, and not cloaking our immediate experiences in reactive thoughts and emotions.



SIMPLE MINDFULNESS EXERCISE

- 1 Assume a comfortable position, either sitting or lying on your back. In a sitting posture, keep your head upright, back straight, and shoulders relaxed.
- 2 Close your eyes or keep them slightly open, whichever feels more comfortable.
- 3 Slowly bring your attention to your abdomen and notice the relaxed expansion of your belly on the inbreath and the slight fall on the outbreath. Just follow the rise and fall of your belly without trying to change the rhythm or speed of your breathing.
- 4 Pay attention to the breath as a focal point by observing the feeling as air flows in and out of right at the tip of your nose. There may be a slight cooling sensation as you inhale and the feeling of warmer air being exhaled.
- 5 As your mind begins to wander away from your focus on the breath, just gently bring it back again. Don't become frustrated with this mind wandering. Just accept it and each time it happens, guide your focus back to your breathing.

Practice this simple mindfulness exercise for about 15-20 minutes.

NOURISH

SHIFT FOCUS AWAY FROM COUNTING CALORIES

Keri Gans, RDN
<https://prevention.com>



LESS ON THE NUMBERS

While you should be *mindful* of the amount of calories you're consuming, it should NOT rule your life.

Every *BODY* is different and requires different amounts of calories depending on not only your age and gender, but also how active or sedentary you are. Because of this, knowing the optimal amount of calories you should be consuming in one day can be confusing.

MORE ON QUALITY

When it comes to losing weight, it's more effective to learn what types of foods you should be getting those calories from, how much of them you should have, and when you should be noshing in order to healthfully lose weight.

Make sure that you know how to build a healthy plate with real, whole foods. If you do this the right way, your calorie count will be where it should be naturally.

REORGANIZE YOUR DINNER PLATE

1/2 should be filled with vegetables, 1/4 with a lean protein, and 1/4 a carb or starch.

Then, take a closer look at the details of that plate. Opt for a lean protein, like chicken or fish, on most days of the week and eat red meat sparingly, and be sure to choose preparation methods like grilling or baking over unhealthier ones like frying or drenching in breading or batter. Pick a whole grain like brown rice or quinoa, or healthful starches like sweet potato.



NOURISH

DETOXIFYING BEET & BERRY SMOOTHIE MAKES 2 SMOOTHIES

Recipe Adapted By: Minimalist Baker



ingredients

- 1/3 cup peeled + chopped raw beet
- 1 1/3 cup frozen strawberries (if fresh, add ice)
- 1/4 ripe frozen banana (optional for added sweetness // peeled + sliced)
- 2/3 cup fresh apple juice
- Fresh mint or shredded coconut (optional)

**** Optional ****

For extra nutrition, add any of the following:

- Flaxseeds
- Chia seeds
- Chlorella powder
- Hemp seeds
- Aloe vera juice

recipe preparation

- Add beet, strawberries, banana (optional for sweetness) and apple juice to a blender and blend on high until creamy and smooth, scraping down sides as needed.
- Taste and adjust flavor as needed, adding more banana for sweetness, apple juice to thin, or strawberries for a more intense fruit flavor.
- Divide between two serving glasses and enjoy.
- Optional: Garnish with banana slices, fresh mint, and/or shredded coconut. Best when fresh, though leftovers will keep covered in the refrigerator for up to 2 days.
- Freeze leftovers in ice cube trays or popsicle molds for an afternoon pick-me-up.

NOURISH

19 HEALTHY SNACK IDEAS FOR WORK & BACK-TO-SCHOOL

1. **Guacamole & sliced bell peppers**
2. **Nuts & dried fruit**
3. **Roasted chickpeas**
4. **Tuna pouch & crackers**
5. **Homemade granola**
6. **Baked veggie chips**
7. **Homemade energy balls**
8. **Overnight oatmeal**
9. **Carrots & hummus**
10. **Dark chocolate covered nuts**
11. **Sliced apple & almond butter**
12. **Hard boiled eggs**
13. **Roasted pumpkin seeds**
14. **Green smoothie**
15. **Chia pudding**
16. **Piece of fruit with a handful of nuts**
17. **Dried fruit**
18. **Cottage cheese & fresh berries**
19. **Sliced cucumbers & hummus**

