

MEAL PLANNING: SIMPLIFY AND SAVE \$\$

If you want to simplify your eating and save money, spend less time buying groceries and, waste less food, meal planning is the answer.

Being prepared and having a plan will keep you successful. Count-less clients have been able to make serious changes to their eating habits once they took the time to plan their meals.

Think about what may happen when you come home from work, mentally exhausted and you don't know what you're going to have for dinner. Do you think you'll whip up a nutritious meal made of whole foods, complete with protein and veggies?

	MONDAY 1	TUESDAY 2	WEDNESDAY 3	THURSDAY 4	FRIDAY 5	SATURDAY 6	SUNDAY 7
WHAT'S GOING ON	CHILL	CHILL	WIFE WORK	WIFE WORK	WORK		
BREAKFAST	WRAP - PB - BANANA - FRUIT	WRAP - PB - BANANA - FRUIT	WRAP - PB - BANANA - FRUIT	WRAP - PB - BANANA - FRUIT	WRAP - PB - BANANA - FRUIT	WRAP - PB - BANANA - FRUIT	WRAP - PB - BANANA - FRUIT
SNACK	CHEESE	ALMONDS	ALMONDS	ALMONDS	ALMONDS	ALMONDS	ALMONDS
LUNCH	WRAP - CHEESE - FRUIT	STUFFED SALMON - SALAD	STUFFED SALMON - CORN SALAD	STUFFED SALMON - SALAD	STUFFED SALMON - SALAD	STUFFED SALMON - SALAD	STUFFED SALMON - SALAD
SNACK	BANANA	HUMMUS VEGGIES	HUMMUS VEGGIES	HUMMUS VEGGIES	HUMMUS VEGGIES	HUMMUS VEGGIES	HUMMUS VEGGIES
DINNER	LOW CARB MEAT & CHEESE VEGGIES	CHICKEN SALAD	STUFFED SALMON - CORN	CHICKEN PER SALAD	HUMMUS VEGGIES - POTATOES - SALAD	LETTUCE WRAP	PIZZA VEGGIES
WATER INTAKE	☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐
EXERCISE		SMALL WALK 7-7:30	BIKE CAMP 5:30-6:30	CORRIDOR 5:30-6:30 SMALL WALK 7-7:30		BIKE CAMP 1-2	

Struggling to make food choices, especially when you are tempted with foods that you know you shouldn't be eating, can be exhausting. Could you imagine if every night you debated whether or not you'd brush your teeth, or lock up the house before you left for the day? You automatically do it, and that makes the process so much easier.

Most of the pain of making healthy choices comes from the inner struggle of deciding whether or not you should eat something. I struggle with this myself. The fewer decisions you have to make, the better.

Meal planning does not have to be a tedious process. I'm going to show you how to keep it really, really simple.

1. Before you start menu planning, make a list of your 'go to' recipes. These are meals that are healthful, easy to make, and they use ingredients that you almost always have on hand. For example, for my family the recipes include tacos, fajitas, pizza and Souvlaki with Greek salad. You may want to store these recipes (or at least a list of the dishes) in a binder so you can refer to it from time to time.
2. Purchase a white board for your fridge. Staples and most stationary stores will sell them. Buy a few fun, colourful markers. I personally prefer the white board as it's so much easier to change the plan during the week when unexpected events come up.
3. Write the days of the week in a column down the left side of the white board. Beside the day, write down any events that you have planned during the week. For example,

you might write down 'dinner out' or 'soccer til 7pm'.

4. Fill in one main meal for each day. Usually, that meal will be dinner. Consider the following:
 - Whenever you cook, make enough for at least one extra meal.
 - Always have emergency food in the freezer (chili, stew, etc.)
 - Know that it's OK to have scrambled eggs and fruit for dinner, or a protein shake from time to time. Think nutrition, not traditional meals. It's also OK to create a meal from the ingredients you have on hand, even if the ingredients don't really go together.
 - If you have the time and desire to research and try out a new recipe once or twice a week, decide on the recipe ahead of time so you only have to go to the grocery store once.
 - Keep recipes that were successful in a binder for future reference. Maybe they will become new staple meals in your home!
 - To keep meal planning even simpler, create a regular, weekly schedule. For example, maybe every Wednesday you have hamburgers, or Thursdays you have soup.

5. For your other meals of the day, stick to a basic rotation. For example, breakfasts could be cottage cheese and fruit, eggs, or left overs. Lunches could be leftovers, salad with tuna, etc. Most people are OK with a basic rotation for breakfast and lunch, but need variety at dinner.

HOW TO GET STARTED ON MENU PLANNING:

1. Block time each week to meal plan!
2. Create a list of your 'go to meals'.
3. Start a binder of go-to recipes (or a list of recipes and where you found them).
4. Get a white board or note pad for your fridge.
5. Create your meal plan for the week! *Keep it simple.*