

TIME FOR CHANGE

GET WITH THE PLAN

What's for Dinner? This may be the most stressful thought at the end of a workday and the most popular question when you get in the door. Stop the madness! Planning a weekly menu can seem daunting, but it can save you both time and money. Having a plan in place can also reduce stress and help you eat better, improving the quality of your day and your lifestyle!

PRIORITIZE YOUR HEALTH



Real life can get in the way of the best intentions. Making your health a priority can easily get overshadowed by other commitments. Personal time management at home can be difficult with so many moving parts. Even though our schedules are tight, life goes on and we need proper fuel to keep up! The food that you feed yourself and your family should be as much of a priority as any appointment, any hobby, and any activity you have on your calendar.

Do you often hear yourself saying?

- "I don't have time to pack a lunch!"
- "There is no room in my schedule to eat healthy."

It's time to start thinking about your priorities in a new way. Support your health first! Ask yourself:

Is making more money, more important than a healthy body?

It's ok if making more money at work is important to you, but think of it this way. If you want to climb the corporate ladder, creating a healthy lifestyle will increase your productivity. It will allow you to think more clearly, and have better cognitive endurance. If you perform better at work, you're more likely to succeed.

Does social or family time seem like a barrier to healthy eating?

You may have to cut some commitments out of your life. While social and family time are important parts of wellness, it may be necessary to decrease some obligations. Eating more fruits and vegetables has been shown to increase positive well-being. Making YOU healthy is more important to your relationships than attending your book club for the book you never read or meeting up for weekly wing night. Replacing some obligations that aren't serving you to be a healthier and happier person can release some time in your schedule to find new recipes, start meal planning, or work on a food journal.



TIME FOR CHANGE

GET WITH THE PLAN



Planning what you eat is perhaps the most powerful tool for reaching your health goals. Meal planning is associated with healthier eating and less risk of obesity. It also saves money and time, and reduces food waste and stress! Planning out healthier meals and snacks isn't difficult if you're used to it, but if healthy eating is new to you, getting started can be daunting and intimidating. Start small. Plan out a morning breakfast if you often skip that meal. Plan a brown bagged lunch for each workday. If dinner is a stressor, make a weekly menu your priority. When you accomplish one task, add on another. Each step you make is a step in the right direction!

Here are some action steps to get you started. Remember that the secret to success in committing to any meal plan is to do what works for you. Try not to set goals that are unrealistic for your schedule or family preferences. Just try to do better.

MEAL PLANNING MADE SIMPLE

Have What You Need

Get your supplies ready. Find or create a meal plan template. Choose some favourite or interesting recipes to try. Keep paper and pens handy for grocery lists or use your phone. Reference weekly grocery flyers or use an online app.

Shop at Home to Save Money

Check the inventory in your pantry, cupboards, and fridge. Try to combine what you currently have available with whole foods that are on sale. For example, you find cans of mixed beans and diced tomatoes. Check your weekly flyer to see if beef or chicken is on sale and make it Taco Tuesday!

Plan Your Meals

You've found some recipes you would like to try, you know what you have to use up in your fridge, and you found a few surprises in your pantry. Now, plan out your meals! You will need 7 breakfasts, lunches, and dinners. Stick to whole foods for healthy snacks: apples, carrots, Greek yogurt, etc.

Make a List

Reference recipe ingredients to make a list of everything needed. Scratch off the items found in your pantry or fridge to prevent overbuying. Organize your list by food department to make the trip quick, easy, and efficient.

Get Your Groceries

Choose a time and day that you will shop and shop once! Dreading the hour trip to the grocery store after a long day at work? Maybe Saturday would work better and you can take advantage of a local farmer's market. You may choose to shop online and pick up at a convenient time - or have it delivered!

TIME FOR CHANGE

GET WITH THE PLAN

What works for some, doesn't work for all. Traditional meal planning might not be something that you can be consistent with or feel inspired by. Try a meal planning app, use a Pinterest Board to collect recipes, or plan a few days at a time. Meal planning is a life skill that everyone should learn, but if it simply doesn't inspire you, you fall behind, or you lose motivation, don't give up! Where there is a will, there is a way!

FIND ANOTHER WAY

FOOD BOX DELIVERY

If you are looking to avoid the time needed to meal plan and grocery shop, a food delivery subscription may be a good option. A trendy, but effective solution for busy lifestyles, a food box delivery service provides all you need to cook a healthy meal at home, delivering recipes and fresh ingredients right to your doorstep. If you're willing to pay for the convenience, you'll not only have access to an assortment of meals each week, adding good variety to your diet, but you'll also discover some new recipes to add to your collection when you are ready to meal plan yourself.



GO FREESTYLE

Not a planner? That's ok too! Take a spin on meal planning and go freestyle! You will still need to make a list and grocery shop, but you can avoid the planning and the recipes with a well-stocked kitchen. Keep all your essential staples on hand – your favourite proteins, good fats, complex carbohydrates, and fruits and vegetables – and keep it simple.

- Pair a chicken breast with broccoli and sweet potato.
- Mix pasta with shrimp, vegetables, olive oil, and lemon juice.
- Use up vegetables and canned goods to make a soup.

Not all of us have a talent for throwing things together, but if this is a style that can work for you, go ahead and freestyle it!

SUCCESS TIP! No matter how you choose to plan your meals, make sure it works for you, and stick with it. YOU CAN DO IT!

Sources: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25080035>
<https://www.businessnewsdaily.com/3699-healthy-eating-worker-productivity.html>
<https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/2017/03/20/meal-prep-planning/>
<https://ijbnpa.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12966-017-0461-7>