

## • TWEAK 8 •

---

# MEAL PREP 101

---

When it comes to eating well, **meal planning** is one of the easiest ways to set yourself up for success. There are so many ways to approach meal planning that, after practicing just once or twice, you'll begin to find what works for you and your family.

## GOALS

1. Find meal planning and prepping techniques that work for you
2. Find easy, healthy, go-to recipes and create a list
3. Learn how to master meal prep

## THINK ABOUT...

- How many meals you need to plan for
- Working with the time you have
- Adding a salad for lunch or dinner
- Planning on a budget
- Building your "go-to" list

## WEEK 1

### PLAN & SHOP YOUR MEALS

---

## WEEK 2

### PREP STRATEGIES

---

## WEEK 3

### SAMPLE MEAL PLANS

---

## WEEK 4

### YOUR TURN!

## • MEAL PREP 101 •

# WEEK 1: PLAN & SHOP YOUR MEALS

## TIPS FOR PLANNING

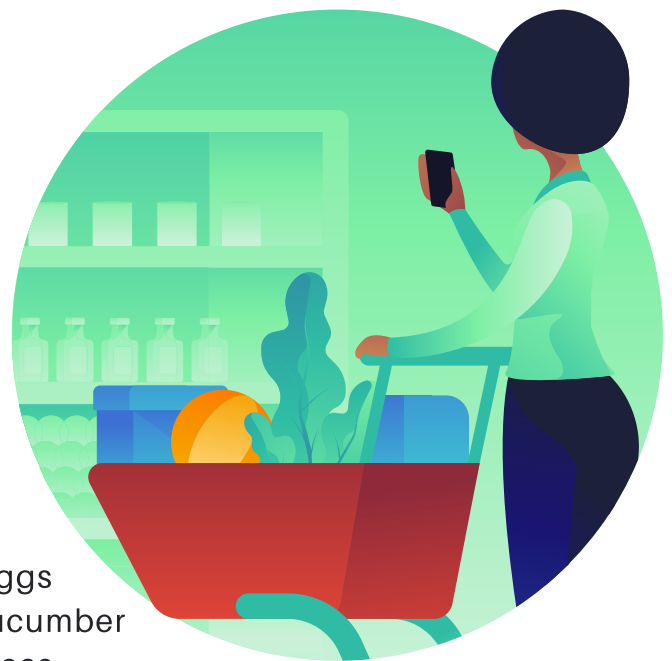
- Review your household's plans for the week to get a rough idea of how many meals you'll need to plan for the week. Also, think about how much mileage you can get from each recipe. Build in recipes that give you **leftovers** for lunch and dinner.
- If you have a crazy busy week coming up, make a mental note to be on the lookout for slow cooker or make-ahead meals that can **served up in a hurry**.
- **Use this weekly meal planner** to identify when you plan on eating out, when you will be out late, which days you have time to cook, when you'll eat leftovers, etc.
- Plan meals around food you **already** have.
- On your handout, write down your **"go-to" recipes**—recipes that are easy to cook that you and your family enjoy.

## TIPS FOR GROCERY SHOPPING

### Produce

Eat more! Aim to make **half** of your plate fruits and veggies. Focus on veggies since most people like fruit already.

- Add fruit to **breakfast** (oatmeal, yogurt, cereal) with some nuts; add veggies to eggs
- Eat veggies as **snacks**: carrots, celery, cucumber slices and peppers with hummus, snap peas
- Pile on to **sandwiches and wraps** (tomatoes, greens, peppers, sprouts)
- Frozen veggies and fruits are **just as good** as fresh (without additives like salt and sauces)



## • MEAL PREP 101 •

# WEEK 1: PLAN & SHOP YOUR MEALS

## Meats

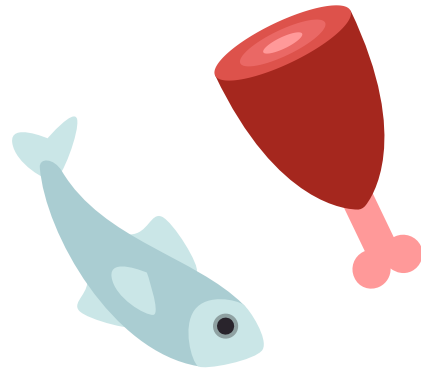
Think **leaner** meats and **lighter** loads. Pick leaner meats and cuts and pay attention to portion sizes (to save calories and money). Re-think your plate, start thinking about your protein as a side dish.

**Serving size:** chicken breast, 3 huge breasts = 6 portions, use in several different meals or freeze

**Price:** cut down on portion sizes and complement with plant proteins and sides like beans

### Look for:

- Difference in ground meats % fat, try ground turkey and ground turkey breast (compared to ground beef)
- Choose "loin" and "round"
- Choose meats with less visible fat
- Choose chicken, turkey, or seafood more often
- Seafood: shop between fresh and frozen, aim for 2x/week



## Dairy

Pay attention to labels to find your **"best fit"** item

- **Milk:** choose unsweetened almond, 2% milk, or skim for reduced fat and sugar content
- **Yogurts** often have high amounts of added sugar, select plain & add your own fresh fruit or nuts
- **Cheese:** Choose harder cheeses for lower fat content, choose natural instead of processed cheeses, watch portion size, and limit cream cheeses which are considered a "fat" not a "dairy"

## Cereal & Cereal Bars

Read labels to find your "best fit" item and don't be fooled by marketing tricks

- **Compare** serving size, carb/sugar, fiber, protein, ingredients
- Bars such as 90 calorie bar and Nature Valley Protein are often packed with sugar and leave you **still hungry** after eating it
- A "healthy" oatmeal cup can have **just as much sugar** as PopTarts

## • MEAL PREP 101 •

# WEEK 1: PLAN & SHOP YOUR MEALS

## Canned Beans & Veggies

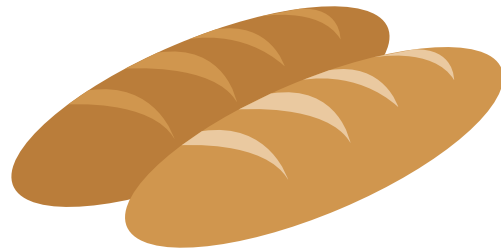
This is where you get more bang for your buck, but watch your sodium intake.

- **Beans** are a great source and balance of fiber, protein and carbs.
- Choose **low sodium** (<140mg sodium per serving), or no salt added.
- 16 oz. of canned beans is roughly 1 lb for about **\$0.85** compared to 1 lb of chicken for **\$4.69/lb.**
- Add beans to your meat proteins to make them last longer, decrease fat, and **save money.**
- Mac and cheese and “convenience foods” are always better when you make it yourself; [check out this easy recipe for mac and cheese.](#)

## Bread

Look for **“whole”** grains and at least 3 grams fiber.

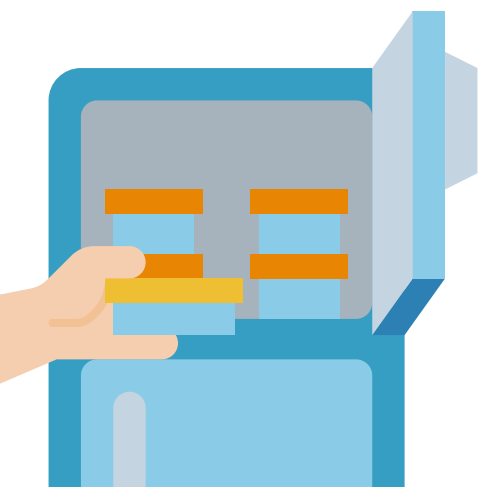
- Read **labels** for carbs, fiber, sodium
- Read ingredients for “whole” grain, **don’t be fooled** by “multi grain,” harvest grain or honey wheat



## Frozen Foods

Making meals yourself is always your best option, so try to limit your frozen foods to whole food items like **veggies, fruits and meats such as seafood.** Then identify “best fit” items, convenience foods, to keep on hand when you’re in a pinch.

- Find lower carb meals by looking for items **without pasta**
- Look for **“Better Choice”** label
- Look at **sodium**
- Don’t be fooled by marketing, like Stouffer’s “Fit Kitchen” meals, which are marketed as healthy but have **tons of sodium**
- Look for veggies **without sauce** (remember to add your own like Mrs. Dash seasonings)
- Pizza: Look for “Better Choice” label & add extra veggies

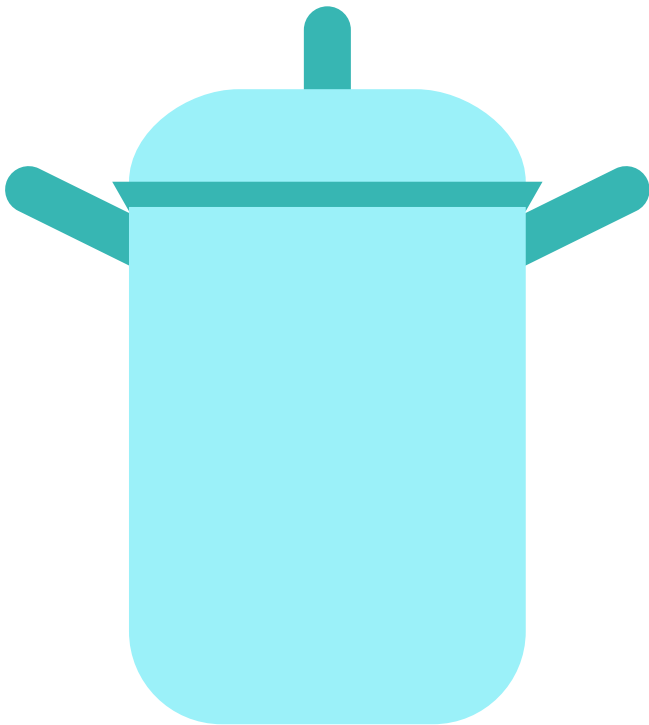


## • MEAL PREP 101 •

# WEEK 2: PREP STRATEGIES

## THIS WEEK

- Gather up your kitchen supplies
- Helpful tools: a crock-pot, 8 x 11 shallow baking dishes and cookie sheets, aluminum foil, varying sized containers for storage, sturdy cutting boards, sharp knives
- [Read about how to use and cook your staples](#)
- Store your meals properly
  - To store your food, you'll need a handy set of containers. You can use regular Tupperware-silicone, glass, or plastic. You can even throw your food in mason jars. If you use plastic containers, make sure they're BPA-free.



## TIPS FOR PREPPING

- Roast several veggies (like broccoli, onions, tomatoes) and cook more grains, such as brown rice or quinoa at once. This way, you'll have extra to use for future meals as a side dish.
- Prep in chunks at a time. There's nothing wrong with cooking for the next 3 days instead of the next 7.
- If prepping 2-3 meals a day for the week is overwhelming, focus on prepping just your breakfasts, lunches or dinners.
  - If you stick to your meal plan and eat more home-cooked foods, you'll save money by not purchasing snacks and lunch on-the-go.
- Lockable lids will prevent spills.

## • MEAL PREP 101 •

# WEEK 3: SAMPLE MEAL PLANS

Now that you have mastered your meal planning techniques and learned meal prepping strategies, we are giving you some sample meal prep plans to try!

SAMPLE WEEKLY MEAL  
PLAN

PREP ONCE, EAT  
HEALTHY ALL WEEK

WEEKEND MEAL PREP  
FOR BUSY PEOPLE

A WEEK OF EASY MEALS  
FOR 2

## • MEAL PREP 101 •

# WEEK 4: YOUR TURN!

Use the strategies you have learned and the sample meal plans provided to prep your own meals this week.

## RESOURCES

[MEAL PLANNER](#)

[MEAL PREP: SPICE UP  
MYPLATE](#)

[VIRTUAL GROCERY  
STORE TOUR](#)

[FOOD SAFETY FAQ](#)