



Meal Prepping Tips



Aka: Tips on how to make your life less stressful and less tempting to eat everything in sight when you are starving and have nothing prepared!!! Don't let this happen by following these simple steps.

1. **Look ahead to the next week:** Find and schedule a time to go grocery shopping and do some food prep. Give yourself at least 2 hours. Make this a priority. You can split this up into two different days. I typically shop on one day and then do all my food prep on the next day. Find what will work best with your schedule and stick with it.
2. **BEFORE you go grocery shopping:** set some time aside to create a meal plan for the week. Write out each day and write down what you will be eating for breakfast lunch and dinner. Make a note on your meal plan what you would like to eat for snacks each day as well.
3. **As you are creating your meal plan:** think through a few things. How much time do you have to prepare meals during the week? Are you crazy busy and don't have time to come home and cook a nice dinner or lunch? Choose some easy crock-pot meals that will be ready when you get home and can have as leftovers the next day. Will you be eating out a couple nights this week or for lunches? Write that down so you don't buy more food than you need and waste it. Don't forget to include some snack options!! Is your family not so on board with eating healthy?? To avoid making two different meals, make your healthy meal and just include some not so healthy options for them to eat with it.
 - a. Examples: You make a roasted chicken with vegetables and sweet potato. Buy some rolls for your family to enjoy instead of the sweet potato. Or let's say you are making a bun-less burger. Just buy the buns and let everyone else enjoy a burger like they normally do. Make a big healthy salad and let your kids/spouse enjoy the ranch while you opt for a healthier option. Or you can just choose to have your family eat whatever you prepare. The choice is up to you on how you want to incorporate your family into this. Everyone will do it differently.
4. **Now that you've made your meal plan:** Create a grocery shopping list. Adjust recipe ingredients to make enough for your whole family or double the ingredients to have leftovers. Write down everything you need. This will save you time from having to run back to the store throughout the week.
5. **After you've made your list:** make a note of all the foods you can prepare ahead of time on your allotted food prep day.
 - a. Look at all the recipes you chose. Are there vegetables that need to be chopped and diced? Meat that could be cooked or baked and just reheated? Write those down to do on your food prep day and just store them in the fridge until you need them during the week. This saves a lot of time.

- b. What about breakfast? Do you even have time to make it? Hopefully you chose options that you can make ahead or can grab and go! If you did, prep these on your food prep day as well.
 - i. Examples: Hard boil your eggs for the week, put smoothie ingredients in individual jars to just throw in and blend in the morning, make a large breakfast casserole to reheat or some egg muffins. Know the time availability you have and plan accordingly.
 - c. Make note of the meals that require meat to be defrosted before. Set an alarm or write a note on your fridge for when you need to take those out so you're not stuck waiting another couple of hours until you can eat come dinner time!!
 - d. Are there snacks you can put in baggies and take with you? Write that down also to prepare on your food prep day.
6. **Now actually do the food prep:** Do this on the day you scheduled it. This is key to your success. It takes a little time and effort but will save you much more time and stress throughout the week if you can prioritize this and make it happen.
7. **You may not have time to prepare everything on this day:** Always refer back to your meal plan to know what meals are coming next so you can prepare ahead of time if possible.
 - a. Did you write leftovers for lunch a couple of days? Make sure to have those stored in to-go containers for you to take with you if you're not at home for lunch.
 - b. Do you have a crock-pot meal planned for dinner the next day? Make sure to check so you know to put it in before you head out the door for work or your busy day!
8. **Remember this is a habit that you have to develop:** It might not be easy at first, but it's worth the effort!! Maybe you're lucky and your spouse or another loved one is helpful in the kitchen and you don't have to do it all alone. Be appreciative of their efforts to help you out.