

PLAN MEALS FOR THE WEEK

I prefer to do this on the weekend. I'll flip through my recipes and choose a bunch to make that week. I'll even pick which days to have which meals if I'm feeling overly ambitious, but that's not necessary if you're new to this. I'll bookmark the pages and write my chosen recipes down in a notebook or even a sheet of paper to put on my fridge. I like to have at least one or two crock pot meals each week because they're so easy, and dinner is ready and waiting when you get home.

Then I create my grocery list. I take a quick look in my fridge, freezer and pantry, and list the recipe ingredients that I need to buy.

Tip: If you're not sure you have enough of an ingredient already, consider buying a "backup" one just in case. I've had times where the tomato sauce I planned to use was a bit short of what I actually needed. Having to run out in the middle of meal prep can be very frustrating.

Another thing to consider is doubling the recipe(s), so you can prep and cook once, but have twice the meal at the end. The extras can be taken for lunch, or frozen to pull out the night before a busy day, so you just need to heat it up when you're ready.

Tip: If you're doubling a recipe, don't forget to double the amount you buy from the grocery store.

Once you have your handy-dandy grocery list ready, hop on over to the store and pick up your essentials. If you don't have enough food storage containers for your meals, now's the time to pick up some of those too.

Tip: If you're not a fan of washing and chopping produce, then consider buying them already pre-washed and pre-chopped, or even frozen. You can make your meal prep even easier if you don't mind spending a couple of extra dollars.

PREPARE MEALS FOR THE WEEK

Since you've already chosen your recipes and have your groceries, let's get started on prepping some of the ingredients.

I like to set aside 2-3 hours one afternoon for this. Get your recipes ready, clear off your counter, and play some music (if you're so inclined). I like to take a dance break every once in a while too. 😊

At this point, depending on time, I'll either prep the ingredients, or pre-cook the entire recipe. Sometimes just washing and chopping produce and putting it in containers is a huge time-saver for weeknights. Or, you can go through and make a whole meal, and divide it up into portions

and refrigerate or freeze. It's really up to you, because the more you do now, the less you'll have to do when you're hungry.

AWESOME MEAL PREP TIP

There is one meal that is easiest to plan and prepare in advance. It's also the one most difficult to eat at home if you're busy.

That's breakfast.

Planning some overnight oatmeal is a great start to any day. Simply place ½ cup rolled oats, ½ cup your choice of milk, 1 tbsp. chia or flax seeds into a container (or make 5 for the whole week). Then place the lid on, shake them up and put them in your fridge. In the morning you can quickly heat them up or even eat them cold (the oats will have absorbed the milk). Top with berries, chopped fruit, nuts or seeds and enjoy. You can also use your crockpot overnight – google some recipes.

With a little planning, you'll be able to eat healthier while saving money and most importantly feeling good. This may take some getting used to, so if I can be of help, please reach out and let me know. barb@yourhealthytruth.com