

The background of the image shows several clear plastic meal prep containers. One container in the foreground is filled with white rice, topped with a piece of cooked chicken and fresh green herbs. Another container next to it contains a salad of green lettuce and sliced cucumbers. In the background, more containers are visible, some containing what looks like fried chicken or tofu, and others with dark beans or lentils. The overall scene is a close-up of healthy meal preparation.

MEAL PREP MASTERY

**THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO
PREPARING HEALTHY &
DELICIOUS MEALS**

in just 2 hours!

Lisa James, DFM, PhD

Disclaimer

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WELCOME

Welcome to Meal Prepping Made Easy!

Whether you're a busy professional, a health enthusiast, or simply looking to streamline your daily routine, our guide to meal prepping is designed to help you save time, eat healthier, and reduce stress. Discover delicious recipes, practical tips, and expert advice to make meal prep a seamless part of your lifestyle. Dive in and learn how to plan, prepare, and store your meals efficiently, ensuring you always have nutritious options ready to enjoy. Let's embark on a journey to a more organized and healthy way of living!

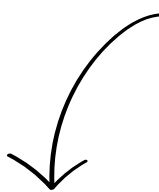
Dr. Lisa James



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If you...



- ☐ Feel overwhelmed by the “what to make for dinner” question
- ☐ Feel unprepared (with available groceries) to make dinner at home
- ☐ Resort to take out more than you’d like
- ☐ Resent money spent eating out when cooking at home is cheaper
- ☐ Believe your diet could be healthier if you cooked more
- ☐ Make several trips to the grocery store in a week

**If you answered YES to ANY of the above,
meal prep would benefit YOU!**

THE POWER OF MEAL PREP

Have you ever noticed how a little time can reap BIG benefits later?

Meal preparation (or 'meal prep') is the action of preparing foods or components of meals in advance. This includes things such as cutting vegetables, cooking rice, and preparing proteins in advance. This way, you can enjoy a quick meal without much preparation.

Just remember these simple concepts to make your meal prep a success:

! Be specific – determine when you will do meal prep, such as after grocery shopping or Sunday mornings after breakfast. Set this time aside and make it a recurring event.

! Start small – you might decide to dedicate 20-30 minutes on a determined day, or maybe even less if you are short on time. Gradually add time to your meal prep sessions as you get used to doing them.

Consistency is key!
You're still getting ahead if you do just a little bit every week!



TOP 5 BENEFITS OF MEAL PREP

1

Saves Time

Cook twice as much in less than twice the time. Having food on hand saves grocery trips and can be faster than take-out.

2

Spend Less Money

Cooking at home costs less than eating out. Using some simple tips you can learn how to save when buying groceries.

3

Improved Nutrition

Prepping and home cooking means healthier, better management of calories. If you're aiming to lose weight, meal prep is a powerful tool to decrease and manage caloric intake.

4

Less Stress

Planning and preparing your meals reduces stress and decision-making. Having food ready can significantly improve and make your decisions easier.

5

It Gets Easier

The process of meal prep is a skill that we you can build upon. You can increase the variety of food choices when getting more comfortable with meal prep and home cooking.

COMPOUNDS OF A BALANCED MEAL

We're all busy people, but without being prepared we are drastically decreasing our chances of success, whether that is a weight loss goal, a performance goal or simply a health goal.

Not having time to prep our healthy meals means we are more likely to reach for that fast food lunch or convenience store snack.

COMPOUNDS OF A BALANCED MEAL

Let's start with what a healthy and balanced meal should look like. Keep in mind all of the components of a balanced meal while planning out your menu and shopping list.

Protein

1-2 palms

Lean animal or plant-based protein.

Vegetables

1-2 fists

Always include a serving of greens and other vegs.

Carbs

1-2 cupped hands

Whole grain pasta, rice, potato, millet, etc.

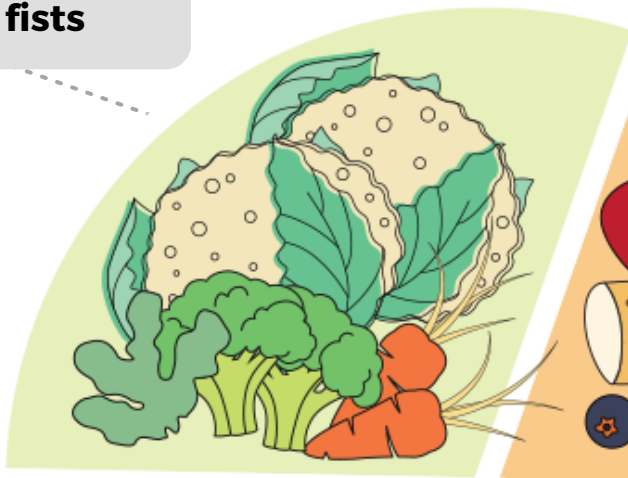
Healthy Fats

1-2 thumbs

Nuts, seeds, avocado, plant oils, etc.



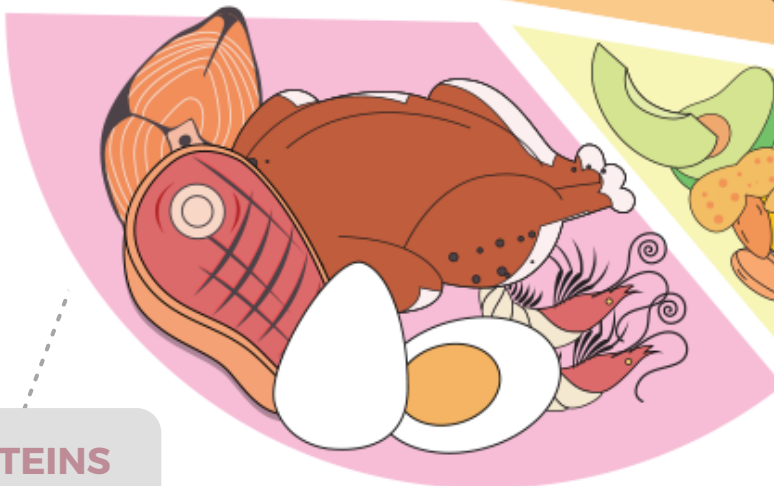
VEGETABLES
1-2 fists



CARBS
1-2 cupped hands



LEAN PROTEINS
1-2 palms



FATS
1-2 thumbs



TIPS AND COOKING TIMELINE

MEAL PLANNING TIPS

1

Plan by looking at the week ahead and decide which days/meals you will need to prep for.

2

Use the weekly meal planner and shopping list to plan out your meals and shopping for the week ahead.

3

Go grocery shopping with your shopping list, don't buy anything that is not on the list.

4

Cook your meals and prep any other ingredients necessary for the week ahead.

5

Store your prepped meals and ingredients in the fridge until required.

COOKING TIMELINE

1. STARCHES

Start by cooking up your grains like rice or potato. You can use these as a base or add as sides to salads or lighter bites. Allocate at least 20-50 mins for this; cooking time will vary depending on the grain and size of the batch.

2 PROTEIN

In the meantime, you can start preparing your protein. Start marinating your meats, fish or tofu, then either bake, air-fry or roast. This can take 20-60 mins depending on the protein choice.

3. VEGETABLES

Prep your veggies by cutting, chopping and washing them. Ideally have three containers, first one for chopped veg that you can use for snacks. The second container can be used for finely chopped veg that can be used for sandwiches or salads. Finally, the third container can be used for vegetables that will need to be cooked (they can also be swapped for frozen).

4. SNACKS

Now it's time to make some healthy snacks, such as protein bars, energy balls or muffins.

5. CONDIMENTS

If there are any sauces, dressings, or dips on your menu, this is the time to make them. You can also buy these but remember to always check labels for any hidden ingredients. Condiments can add a lot of flavor to your meals, and they're perfect to use with cold or warm dishes.

6. FRUIT

Most fruits like berries or apples don't need to be prepped, other than washing them thoroughly, but if you have mango or pineapple, you can cut it into pieces and store in a container.

TIPS FOR MACROS

MEAL PREP

1. Vegetable Prep

- Place pre-cut vegetables in clear glass containers in the fridge, where they will last for 4 to 10 days. Place them at eye level so you will remember to use them!
- Portion vegetables into lunch-sized containers to make lunches a breeze to pack.
- Pre-cut and freeze onions, so they are always ready to throw into cooking.
- Roast a tray of vegetables in the oven and later add to salads or soups

2. Protein Prep

- Hard-cooked eggs will last in the fridge for 7 days. Keeping them ready in the fridge means they are easy to grab as a snack or toss on a salad or wrap.
- Rotisserie chicken – if you don't have the time to make your own, buy one! Not my preferred choice - Just be sure to watch the sodium. Great for a quick sandwich or salad topping or to add to soups, stews, and pasta.
- Ready-to-eat beans – canned black beans, lentils, and chickpeas can be quickly opened and rinsed to add to meals.
- Cheese – grate cheese and place it in a container in the fridge.
- Pre-cook protein - chicken, turkey, lean ground beef, or tofu and store in the fridge.

3. Carbs Prep

- Choose one or two carbohydrates (such as brown rice, whole-grain pasta, or quinoa) in advance and cook a batch. Allow to cool and set aside in the fridge.
- Instant Pots or rice cookers make carb prep even easier!

STEP BY STEP

MEAL PREP

Step #1: Stay Well-Stocked

Keeping your kitchen stocked with essential ingredients will help you put together a healthy meal—make-ahead or not—without running to the store. Staple ingredients are nutritious, packed with flavor, and endlessly versatile.



Step #2: Make a plan

Before you head to the supermarket with make-ahead meals in mind, sit down and make a list of the recipes you want to make. If you wish to fix and freeze meals for the next week or two months, you need a list of the ingredients necessary to prepare them.

Check your pantry, refrigerator, and freezer first to see if you already have ingredients on hand, and then determine the ingredients you have to purchase. Make recipes with similar ingredients to save time and money and reduce the risk of waste.

Step #3: Schedule Your Make-Ahead Meal Making

Make sure you schedule your cooking time closely after your food shopping to maximize nutrients from fruits and vegetables and prepare food at its freshest. The amount of time you need is dependent on the dishes—and the number of dishes—you've decided to make.



Step #4: Get Organized

Arrange your ingredients in the order you will use them, and set your cookware, measuring tools, and utensils on the counter for easy access. Go through your freezer and discard any foods that have freezer burn, have been sitting in there since last year, or that you won't eventually consume. Arrange the remaining freezer items so you have room to store your soon-to-come freezer-friendly meals.

Step #5: Prep Your Ingredients

The last thing you want to do while cooking a dish is to realize you need to finely chop two large onions, skin the chicken thighs, or defrost the berries. Before launching your meal prepping, read the recipes and prep ingredients accordingly. Use a variety of bowls to hold ingredients for each recipe; for example, if a recipe calls for sautéing diced onions, carrots, and celery, place them all in a bowl and add them to the pot when the oil is hot.

SAFETY FIRST!

When cooking, always make sure to do the following:

- Keep raw meat, poultry, and fish away from grains and other food.
- Use separate cutting boards for raw meats/poultry/seafood and produce.
- Wash your hands before and right after handling raw foods.
- Place prepped perishable foods in the refrigerator until ready to use if you aren't immediately using them.
- Sharpen your knives. Dull knives are often more dangerous than sharp ones because cutting with a dull knife requires more force, which increases the risk of losing control of it and cutting yourself.

Step #6: Weigh and measure things

This includes your ingredients when cooking and your amounts when portioning out meals. This is the only way to go if you're trying to achieve perfectly evenly portioned meals.

Grab yourself a kitchen scale. Then do some easy math: Total weight divided by the number of portions. And that's one serving!

Step #7: Get Cooking!

Now that you have your cookware and ingredients in place, it's time to get cooking. When cooking multiple meals, consider starting with the most time-intensive recipes. You can use the downtime to prepare other dishes.

Recipes that require a slow cooker can be started the night before or in the morning. The time you spend cooking these make-ahead meals may seem intensive now, but remember, you are making meals—perhaps double and triple batches of recipes—that will conveniently feed your family for the following days.

Some food ingredients, cooked or prepped, can easily be the base of multiple meals during the week. The most commonly used example is probably shredded chicken. Cook a few chicken breasts up, slice them, and store them. Use it to start a casserole, tacos, salad, or whatever you want during the week, so you don't have to start from scratch.



Things to prep and use in different meals during the week:

- meats: chicken, turkey, beef, pork, rotisserie chicken, or ground taco meats
lunch and dinner
- starches: quinoa, rice, lentils, roasted potatoes
- chopped fruits and veggies: prep these so you can snack and save time during the week or so they're ready for quick roasting during the week

Step #8: Cool Cooked Foods Completely

After you've cooked your meals, let them cool at room temperature for no more than two hours and then refrigerate until completely cool. This minimizes the risk of bacteria growth and will ensure your make-ahead meals freeze better. Freezing foods only once completely cooled better preserves their taste and texture and reduces the risk of moisture becoming trapped in the container, bag, or wrap and creating freezer burn.

COOLING TIPS:

- If you're in a hurry, divide large batches into smaller portions; smaller portions cool faster.
- Place food in freezer bags and lay flat; flat thin items cool faster than thick ones. Just be sure to avoid placing hot food items in the bags, as the plastic could melt!



Step #9: Use airtight containers, preferably Glass.

There are so many cons to plastic containers, but that's not what this list is for. Plastic is terrible for the environment. And even if you don't care about the environment, plastic containers warp and don't stand up to conditions like continuous microwaving, dishwashing, or freezing. Glass will last you way longer.

Step #10: Make it enjoyable

You're more likely to stick to your new meal-planning habit if it's something you enjoy doing. Instead of thinking of it as something you must do, try to reframe it as a form of self-care mentally.

If you're the household chef, consider making meal prep a family affair. Have your family help you chop vegetables or batch cook some soup for the week ahead, so these activities become quality time spent together instead of just another chore.

If you prefer to meal prep solo, throw on your favorite music, a podcast, or an audiobook while you do it.

“ Create healthy habits, not restrictions
~ Unknown ”



HOW TO STOCK

Top Pantry Staples, Fridge and Freezer Foods

A well-stocked kitchen helps you whip meals together without going to the grocery store. This leads to less stress and enjoying more home-cooked meals. When you always have certain items available, making simple meals is easy.



Stock your Fridge

- ✓ Low fat milk or alternative
- ✓ Cheese (fat-free feta, fat-free cotatge cheese, fat-free mozzarella)
- ✓ Yogurt
- ✓ Eggs (fresh in the carton and also pre-made, hard-cooked eggs)
- ✓ Vegetables and fruits
- ✓ Roasted Turkey/Chicken



Stock your Pantry

- ✓ Sprouted Bread
- ✓ Sprouted Tortillas
- ✓ Whole-wheat crackers
- ✓ Whole-wheat pasta
- ✓ Rolled oats
- ✓ Quinoa
- ✓ Rice
- ✓ Canned beans
- ✓ Peanut butter or powdered peanut butter
- ✓ Oil (ie., olive, avocado)
- ✓ Light dressings



Stock your Freezer

- ✓ Frozen fruit
- ✓ Frozen veggies

Macronutrients

CHEATSHEET for Proteins

FOOD	CAL	PROTEINS	CARBS	FATS
Beef, ground (80% lean)	254	17g	0g	20g
Beef, filet mignon	271	20g	0g	8g
Beef, sirloin steak	250	26g	0g	10g
Chicken breast, skinless	165	31g	0g	1g
Chicken thighs, skinless	209	26g	0g	9g
Turkey breast, skinless	104	29g	0g	1g
Turkey, ground (80% lean)	171	18g	0g	10g
Pork chop, center loin	221	26g	0g	9g
Pork tenderloin	143	23g	0g	3g
Pork, ground (80% lean)	287	18g	0g	14g
Salmon, wild-caught	206	20g	0g	13g
Sardines	208	25g	0g	11g
Tuna	116	30g	0g	1g
Shrimp	85	24g	0g	1g
Butter	717	0.9g	0g	81g
Cheddar cheese	403	25g	1.2g	33g
Colby cheese	394	23g	1.6g	29g
Cottage cheese (regular)	342	6g	4g	34g
Cottage cheese (low-fat)	72	10g	2.8g	1g
Cream cheese (reguar)	342	3g	3g	34g
Cream cheese (low-fat)	246	7g	3g	10g
Feta cheese	264	14g	1g	21g
Gouda cheese	356	25g	2g	28g
Yogurt, Greek (regular)	97	10g	4g	10g
Yogurt, Greek (low-fat)	73	9g	3.6g	2g
Eggs	155	13g	1.1g	11g
Tofu	76	8g	2g	6g
Tempeh	193	19g	9g	11g

*All values are per 100g of the product

Macronutrients

CHEATSHEET for Carbohydrates

FOOD	CAL	PROTEINS	CARBS	FATS
Oats	389	11g	66g	6.5g
Brown rice	111	2.7g	23g	2.6g
Quinoa	120	4.4g	21g	6g
Barley	354	2.3g	28g	1.2g
Whole wheat bread	247	9.4g	49g	2.4g
Whole wheat pasta	131	13g	26g	1g
Buckwheat	343	13.3g	71g	2.7g
Rye	335	6g	79g	1.5g
Sweet potatoes	86	1.6g	20g	0.1g
Potatoes	87	2g	17g	0g
Corn	96	3.2g	19g	1.1g
Peas	81	5.4g	14g	0.4g
Pumpkin	26	1g	7g	0.1g
Squash	45	1g	4g	0.1g
Yams	118	1.5g	28g	0g
Lentils	116	9g	20g	1g
Chickpeas	364	8.9g	27g	6g
Black beans	341	8.9g	23g	0.9g
Kidney beans	127	8.7g	22g	1.1g
Navy beans	347	8.2g	24g	0.1g
Lima beans	338	7.8g	15g	0.3g
Apples	52	0.3g	14g	0.1g
Bananas	89	1.1g	23g	0.3g
Oranges	47	0.9g	12g	0.2g
Grapes	69	0.7g	18g	0.1g
Melons	34	0.8g	8g	0.1g
Peaches	37	0.9g	10g	0.2g
Pears	57	0.4g	15g	0.1g
Mangoes	60	0.8	15g	0.3g

*All values are per 100g of the product

Macronutrients

CHEATSHEET *for Fats*

FOOD	CAL	PROTEINS	CARBS	FATS
Butter	717	0.8g	0.6g	81g
Ghee	900	0g	0g	99g
Mayonnaise	684	1.1g	3.2g	75g
Olive oil	884	0g	0g	100g
Coconut oil	862	0g	0g	100g
Avocado oil	884	0g	0g	100g
Flaxseed oil	884	0g	0g	100g
Avocado	160	2g	8.5g	15g
Almonds	579	21.2g	21.6g	49g
Walnuts	654	15.2g	13.7g	65g
Pecans	691	9g	3.9g	72g
Cashews	553	18.2g	30g	44g
Macadamia nuts	718	7.9g	4.5g	76g
Brazil nuts	656	14.3g	2.3g	66g
Peanut butter	589	25g	20.6g	50g
Almond butter	614	21.2g	18.7g	50g
Flaxseeds	534	18.2g	28.8g	42g
Chia seeds	486	16.5g	42g	31g
Sunflower seeds	584	20.7g	20.7g	51g
Pumpkin seeds	559	30.2g	10.7g	49g
Hemp seeds	553	31.5g	3.4g	49g
Tahini	633	17g	17g	53g
Olives	115	0.8g	3.8g	15g
Dark chocolate	604	5.5g	45g	30g

*All values are per 100g of the product

MEAL PREP RECIPES

Smoky Chicken and Cinnamon Roasted Sweet Potato

PREP TIME: 20 minutes

COOK TIME: 50 minutes

YIELD: 4 servings

INGREDIENTS

Cinnamon Roasted Sweet Potatoes

- 2 sweet potatoes (about 3/4 lb. each)
- 1 Tbsp cooking oil
- 1/2 tsp cinnamon
- pinch cayenne pepper
- pinch salt

Smoky Chicken

- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- 1 tsp brown sugar
- 1/4 tsp garlic powder
- 1/8 tsp cayenne pepper
- 1/4 tsp salt
- freshly ground pepper
- 2 boneless, skinless chicken breasts (about 2/3 lb. each)
- 1 Tbsp cooking oil

Green Beans

- 1 lb. green beans
- 1 Tbsp butter
- pinch salt and pepper



DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F. Wash the sweet potatoes, pat them dry, and prick their skins a few times with a fork. Slice the sweet potatoes in half lengthwise, then place them on a baking sheet. Drizzle the cooking oil over the potatoes, then use your hands to smear the oil over their entire surface (skin and cut sides), leaving a liberal amount of oil on the baking sheet under the potatoes to keep them from sticking.
2. Place the sweet potatoes with the cut side up, then sprinkle with cinnamon, a pinch of cayenne pepper, and a pinch of salt. Flip the sweet potatoes over so they are cut side down, then roast for 45-50 minutes, or until they are soft all the way through and the juices are caramelized and bubbling out of the holes in the skin.
3. While the sweet potatoes are roasting, prepare the chicken and green beans. Combine the spices for the chicken in a small bowl (smoked paprika, brown sugar, garlic powder, cayenne, salt, and freshly ground pepper-about 20 cranks of a pepper mill).
4. Pat the chicken dry, then sprinkle the spice rub over both sides. Heat a large skillet over medium, then add the cooking oil and swirl to coat the surface. Add the chicken and cook until they are deeply browned on each side and the internal temp has reached 165°F. Remove the chicken to a cutting board and let it rest.
5. While the chicken is cooking, prepare the green beans. Add about one-inch water to a sauce pot and place a steaming basket in the pot. Add the green beans to the basket, place a lid on top, and place them over medium-high heat. Allow the water to come up to a boil and steam the green beans for 7-10 minutes, or until they are bright green and only slightly softened.
6. Remove the green beans from the pot, pour out the water, and place the beans back in the pot without the steaming basket. Add 1 Tbsp butter and allow the residual heat from the beans to melt the butter. Stir to coat, then season with a pinch of salt and pepper.
7. Slice the chicken breasts into strips. Divide the sweet potato halves, green beans, and chicken between four containers or plates. Serve immediately or refrigerate and reheat later.

Ground Turkey Stir-Fry

PREP TIME: 10 minutes

COOK TIME: 15 minutes

YIELD: 5 servings

INGREDIENTS

Stir Fry Sauce

- 1/4 cup soy sauce or substitute with coconut aminos
- 1/2 Tbsp toasted sesame oil
- 1/2 Tbsp brown sugar
- 1 pinch red pepper flakes (optional)
- 1 Tbsp water

Stir Fry

- 2 bell peppers
- 4 green onions
- 2 oz. spinach (two large handfuls or 1/4 of an 8oz. bag)
- 2 Tbsp cooking oil of choice
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 19 oz. ground turkey

For Serving

- 1/4 cup chopped peanuts
- 2.5 cups cooked brown rice

DIRECTIONS

1. Stir the soy sauce, toasted sesame oil, brown sugar, red pepper, and water until the sugar dissolves. Set the sauce aside.
2. Dice the bell peppers and slice the green onions.
3. Heat the cooking oil in a very large skillet over medium heat. Once hot, add the ground turkey and minced garlic. Stir and cook until the turkey is cooked and no water is left pooling on the bottom of the skillet (8-10 minutes).
4. Once the turkey is cooked and the moisture has evaporated, add the bell pepper and green onions to the skillet. Stir and cook for about 2 minutes more, then add the spinach and continue to cook until it is about half wilted (1-2 minutes).
5. Pour the stir-fry sauce into the skillet. Stir and cook the turkey and vegetables until everything is coated in sauce.
6. Serve about 1 cup of the stir-fry mixture with 1/2 cup rice and a sprinkle of chopped peanuts over the top.

Easy Pesto Chicken and Vegetables

PREP TIME: 15 minutes

COOK TIME: 15 minutes

YIELD: 4 servings

INGREDIENTS

- 1 red bell pepper
- 1 zucchini
- 1 yellow squash
- 1/2 red onion
- 1.3 lbs. boneless, skinless chicken breast
- 2 Tbsp cooking oil
- 1 cup frozen green beans
- 1/3 cup pesto
- 1/8 tsp salt
- 1/8 tsp freshly cracked pepper
- 1 Tbsp grated Parmesan

DIRECTIONS

1. Chop the bell pepper, yellow squash, and zucchini, and slice the red onion. I like to make different shapes for each vegetable but aim to make the pieces all around the same size.
2. Cube the chicken breasts into ½-inch pieces.
3. Add the cooking oil to a large skillet and heat over medium-high. Once the skillet and oil are very hot, add the chicken and sauté until the chicken pieces are opaque (3-5 minutes – the chicken will continue to cook as you add vegetables).
4. Add the green beans to the skillet and sauté for 1-2 minutes more, or just until thawed.
5. Add the bell pepper and red onion to the skillet. Sauté for 1-2 minutes more. If water is beginning to pool in the skillet, turn the heat up slightly. It should be hot enough that the water released from the vegetables evaporates quickly.
6. Add the yellow squash and zucchini to the skillet and continue to sauté 2-3 minutes more, or just until the squash softens slightly.
7. Turn the heat off, add the pesto to the skillet, and stir until everything is coated. Give the vegetables a taste and add salt, pepper, or more pesto if desired. Top with a light sprinkle of Parmesan just before serving.

Apple Pie Overnight Oats

PREP TIME: 5 minutes

COOK TIME: 8 hours

YIELD: 4 servings

INGREDIENTS

- 1 1/3 cups old-fashioned rolled oats
- 1/2 tsp cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp ground ginger
- 1/4 tsp ground cloves
- 1/2 cup chopped walnuts
- 1/4 cup dried cranberries
- 1 1/3 cups unsweetened applesauce
- 1 1/3 cups milk



DIRECTIONS

1. Add 1/3 cup oats each to four resealable containers. Also, add 1/8 tsp cinnamon, a pinch of ginger, and a pinch of cloves to each container.
2. Add 2 Tbsp chopped walnuts and 1 Tbsp cranberries to each container.
3. Finally, add 1/3 cup applesauce and 1/3 cup milk to each container.
4. Close the containers and refrigerate overnight or for up to four days. Stir the contents of the container before eating.

Hummus Lunch Box

PREP TIME: 5 minutes

COOK TIME: 8 hours

YIELD: 4 servings

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cucumber
- 2 pita breads
- 1 cup hummus
- 1-pint grape tomatoes
- 1 6oz. jar kalamata olives)



DIRECTIONS

1. Slice the cucumber and cut the pita bread into triangles.
2. Divide the hummus, cucumber, tomatoes, olives, and pita triangles between four containers. Refrigerate for up to 5 days.

Mini Broccoli Cheddar Quiche

PREP TIME: 30 minutes

COOK TIME: 35 minutes

YIELD: 12 servings

INGREDIENTS

Crust

- 8 Tbsp butter, room temperature
- 4 oz. cream cheese, room temperature
- 1 cup + 2 Tbsp all-purpose flour

Filling

- 2 large eggs
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan
- 1/4 tsp garlic powder
- 1/4 tsp freshly cracked pepper
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/2 lb. frozen broccoli florets, thawed
- 4 oz. cheddar cheese, shredded

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Add the room temperature butter and room temperature cream cheese to a bowl. Use a mixer to whip them together until evenly combined.
2. Begin stirring in the flour, about 1/4 cup at a time, until a dough forms. The dough should be soft, but not sticky.
3. Divide the dough into 12 equal portions (begin by dividing into four pieces, then divide each quarter into three equal-sized pieces). Roll each piece of dough into a ball, then drop each one into the well of a muffin tin. Use your fingers to press the dough down into the center and up the sides of the wells (see step by step photos below for more help).
4. Whisk together the eggs, milk, Parmesan, garlic powder, pepper, and salt in a bowl.
5. Finely chop the thawed broccoli florets (about 1.5 cups once chopped). Shred the cheddar cheese (about 1 cup shredded). Add the broccoli and cheddar to the egg mixture and stir to combine.

6. Divide the broccoli cheddar mixture between the twelve mini pie crusts. The liquid egg mixture will not fully submerge the broccoli and cheddar in the crust, but it will puff up and fill the crust once baked.
7. Bake the mini quiches in the preheated oven for 35 minutes or until puffed in the center and golden brown around the edges.
8. Carefully transfer the baked quiches to a wire rack to cool. Serve warm, or at room temperature within two hours of baking.



Cobb Salad

PREP TIME: 15 minutes

COOK TIME: 45 minutes

YIELD: 4 servings

INGREDIENTS

- 1 boneless, skinless chicken breast* (about 2/3 lb.)
- 1 pinch salt and pepper
- 1/2 tsp smoked paprika (optional)
- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 4 large eggs
- 4 slices bacon (can substitute chicken or turkey bacon)
- 1 15oz. can chickpeas, rinsed and drained
- 1 pint grape tomatoes
- 4 oz. cheddar (cubed or shredded)
- 2 oz. spring mix or baby romaine*
- 1/2 cup salad dressing*

DIRECTIONS

1. Cook the chicken first to ensure it has time to cool before you build your salads. The warm chicken will cause the greens to wilt prematurely. Cover the chicken with plastic, then pound with a rolling pin until it is an even thickness. This will help the breast cook evenly. Season both sides of the chicken breast with salt, pepper, and smoked paprika.
2. Heat 1 Tbsp olive oil in a skillet over medium heat, then swirl to coat the skillet's surface in oil. Add the chicken to the skillet and cook on each side for 5-7 minutes or until it is well browned on the outside and cooked. Transfer the chicken to a clean cutting board, let it rest for five minutes, then dice it into small pieces. Place the chopped chicken in a bowl and refrigerate while you prepare the rest of the ingredients.
3. Add one inch of water to a pot, place a lid on top, then boil over high heat. Place four large eggs in a steaming basket, and once the water is boiling, carefully lower the basket into the pot. Replace the lid on top and allow the eggs to steam for 12 minutes. After 12 minutes, transfer the steaming basket and eggs to a bowl full of ice water to cool.
4. Place four slices of bacon in a skillet and cook over medium heat until brown and crispy (I used the same skillet used for the chicken). Once fully browned, transfer to a paper towel-covered plate to drain.
5. To build the salads: Place 2 Tbsp dressing on the bottom of your container. Next, layer the chickpeas, tomatoes, and chopped chicken. Peel the eggs, slice or cut them into quarters, and add them to the dish. Crumble the bacon over the top, followed by the cheese. Lastly, place a couple of handfuls of fresh greens on top. Be sure not to pack it too tightly.
6. The salads will last about four days (depending on your specific ingredients, containers, and refrigerator environment). To serve, stir the salad or shake the closed container to distribute the dressing throughout.



CONCLUSION

Meal prepping might take some getting used to, but it's a step in the right direction toward being a healthier you. And you might find that it will become a favorite new habit.

When looking to integrate some meal prep strategies into your life, the ultimate goal is to make healthy eating a quick and low-effort option so you can stay on track with your nutrition and health goals (even on the busiest of days). Whether you embrace meal prep habits yourself and enlist the help of a specialized company, you will benefit from having some nutritious meals and snacks ready and waiting.

Through personal experience, I've learned that once the healthy option becomes the most convenient, it is tough to turn it down. And choosing this option consistently will have far-reaching effects on your health and wellness.

