

Dr. Daemon Jones

Your expert for diabetes, hormones, metabolism and weight loss.



10 Tips to Make Meal Planning Easy

Planning is the key to success in every area of your life. Healthy eating is no exception. I've learned that a few minutes of meal planning every week can completely transform getting food on the table into healthy and tasty eating in a flash.

Here is a quote from Thekitchn.com that presents a great perspective on meal planning:

"It's whatever way you organize yourself to cook a meal, whether that's breakfast, lunch, or dinner. It is the plan you make before you shop. Some people plan a month in advance, freezing neatly-labeled packets of soup and stew. Others wing it, shopping for that evening's meal at the farmers' market and picking up whatever looks good to them. Meal planning is a really personal thing. What works for you may not work for me. The goal, I think, is to find a process that is both enjoyable and effective."

Prepping

Prepping can set the stage for making meals more fun! Many people enjoy the process of looking at picture of beautiful food, and reading through cookbooks or sites with awesome recipes or celebrity chefs. So start out looking for things that get your taste buds excited about meals.

1) Try something new

Most people prepare the same foods every week. This makes meal planning easy. It also makes meal eating boring. So pick an ingredient that you really like and try a new recipe. Talk to friends about recipes they like. Read through new cookbooks or go to websites like Pinterest that have great pictures of delicious foods. This will make eating, and playing in the kitchen, fun.

2) Save your new recipes

Find a place to save your recipes so you can remember what you would like to cook. When I get a new recipe I put Post-it notes in the book for the recipes I like. Then I spend the next couple of months cooking out of that book. It may be a bit old-fashioned, but it is a way that I fully enjoy my new book before I move on to another one.

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3) Try new foods

I love going to the farmers' market to see what is in season. Sometimes I end up with things that look interesting but that I have no idea how to cook. I buy these things because it allows my creativity to start to kick in. I go to the Web and look for recipes with my new ingredient and make plans to try it out.

Organizing

Once you have ideas about what you can cook in an easy way, you are ready to sync your recipes with your schedule to figure out when you will have time to cook.

4) Take a realistic look at your schedule

Look at your schedule to see when you have pockets of time to make meals. Either use your old faithful recipes, or use new recipes you created, or a combination of both.

5) Consider cooking multiple meals at once

When I was young, my mother used to make multiple meals at on Sunday afternoons. She would make two to three meals and put them in the refrigerator. Later in the week she would pull one out in the evening when we got home from our extracurricular activities.

6) Make a grocery list before you go to the grocery store

Spend a few minutes looking through your refrigerator, freezer and the pantry before your go to the grocery store. This will help you get in and out of the store very quickly. You will be surprised how fast it is.

Cooking

7) Start the prep when you get home

Make your cooking life easier by prepping your food as you are putting it away. Chop up foods for later use. Section off foods into serving sizes that you will cook and place any extras in the freezer for another time.

If you use my mother's method you will even starting cooking or roasting foods as you are putting away your groceries. This cuts down on the time it takes to make your meals during the week.

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8) Keep a stocked pantry

This is essential for making cooking easy. I have an online course where I literally take you through my pantry to show you all the things I use to make cooking easy and fun! A stocked pantry is so important that I devote a whole module to it. Once you have a great pantry you can cut down your cooking time significantly.

9) Make extra to freeze for later

I always make extra batches of food, especially if I have already tried the recipe and know that I love it. This allows me to freeze meals for later in the week or the month. I can pull something down when I get home late and don't have time or feel like cooking a meal. It is one of my favorite tips!

10) Cook with friends

Get your friends in on the fun! Each of you can make a dish with enough to share with others. This cuts down on the cooking time and increasing the amount of healthy yummy food.

Call neighbors, co-workers or friends to join in on the cooking. Every one can have fun by selecting different meals or sharing food and ingredients so they won't go bad.

So there you have it! Meal planning 101, simple and easy cooking. If you want more tips about meal planning, grocery shopping and creating a perfect pantry consider taking my 6-Week Kitchen Magic Course. It teaches all the things you need to know to make healthy cooking easy and fun.

Happy Cooking!

Live Vibrantly,
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