



MEAL PREP

A GUIDE FOR BUSY ADULTS

Meal prepping is a fantastic way to save time, eat healthier, and reduce stress during your busy week. It involves preparing whole meals or dishes ahead of schedule. It's particularly helpful for busy adults juggling work, kids, and various other responsibilities. Plus, it's a great activity to include your children in, making it a fun and educational family experience!

KEY ELEMENTS OF MEAL PREPPING

- **Planning.** Start by planning your meals for the week. Follow those Anti-inflammatory diet food plans and create balanced meals that align with your family's taste preferences. This is a great place to include the kids! Let them pick out a recipe to not only include them but make sure it's something they will want to eat when hangry after school, sports, dance, band, etc.
- **Shopping.** Make a shopping list based on your meal plan. Focus on buying whole, unprocessed foods.
- **Prepping.** Set aside a few hours during the weekend to prepare and cook your meals. You can cook entire recipes or just prep parts of meals to speed up the daily process.
- **Storing.** Store your prepped meals or ingredients in containers. Label them with the date and contents for easy access during the week.

TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL MEAL PREPPING

- **Keep It Simple.** Start with recipes that are simple and familiar, and only prep for 2–3 days worth of meals.
- **Decide which meal you'd like to prep.** Have trouble getting a healthy breakfast in before you leave the house? Then start by prepping breakfasts for the next few days. If you struggle more with choosing healthy lunch choices, or find that you are eating fastfood lunches more than a few times per month then it might be better to focus on prepping lunch.

If the issue is coming home and not knowing what to cook for dinner, or you catch yourself picking up take out on the way home then consider prepping dinners. Don't feel like you have to prep every meal for every day for the upcoming weeks.

- **Batch Cooking.** Rather than full meals, cook staples like grains, proteins, and roasted vegetables that can be mixed and matched. For example bake 4 lbs of chicken breasts all at once and shred with 2 forks and keep in the refrigerator. Black or Pinto beans in a pressure cooker can be cooked in large batches and keep well in the refrigerator as well.
- **Versatile Ingredients.** Choose ingredients that can be used in multiple recipes, such as the beans and chicken noted above. These are great examples of things that can be seasoned to match any palate.
- **Consider how certain foods will last in the refrigerator.** These vegetables will keep well after being cut into bite sized pieces: *Peppers, cabbage, carrots, celery, broccoli, cauliflower.* These vegetables may need to wait until the day of: *Lettuce, spinach, avocado, onion, tomatoes.*
- **Don't dress the salad.** If Preparing salads in advance bring your salad dressing with you and add it right before you are going to eat. Any sooner and you may turn the salad into a wilted mess!
- **Invest in good containers.** Use glass containers with airtight lids to maintain freshness and make re-heating safe.

