HOW TO MASTER MEAL PREP

Try the make-ahead strategies used by Precision Nutrition's most successful clients and you'll always have healthy food on hand.

WHAT A HEALTHY MEAL LOOKS LIKE

Before mastering meal prep, learn what, and how much, to eat.

ON THE WEEKEND

Prep one-pot meals and versatile ingredients like grilled chicken and roasted veggies.

STEP 1 LOOK AHEAD

5 MIN

For which busy days in the coming week will you need pre-prepped meals?

STEP 2 MAKE A MENU

15 MIN

Jot down ideas for your pre-prepped meals. Keep this general; nothing five-star.

STEP 3 SHOP FOR INGREDIENTS

45 MIN

Buy the ingredients for for your pre-prepped meals.

STEP 4 COOK FOR THE WEEK

Consider recipes such as Dr. John's chili below

120 MIN

Cook time-consuming meal components: chicken, veggies, potatoes, etc.

STEP 5 STORE IT CONVENIENTLY

15 MIN

Pack your prepped food in stackable clear containers and make them accessible in the fridge.

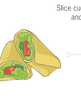
THE NIGHT BEFORE

Soak hearty foods like whole grains, beans, and oats to save up to an hour of cooking time.

GRAINS

Dump slow-cooking whole grains (like spelt, barley, or wheat berries) into a large bowl.

Cover them with a couple inches of water.



Leave them on the counter overnight.

Discard soaking water and pour soaked grains into a pot; cover with two inches of fresh water and boil until tender, 15-60 minutes.

OATMEAL

In a jar, combine equal parts rolled oats, milk, and plain yogurt (generally 1/3 - 1/2 cup each).

Mix in healthy toppings like fresh or dried fruit, nuts, seeds, spices and/or protein powder.

Cover and store in the fridge overnight.

Enjoy for breakfast warm or cold.

BEANS

Pour 1 part beans into a large bowl.

Cover with 4 parts water.

Leave them on the counter overnight.

Discard soaking water and pour 1 part soaked beans into a pot; cover with 3 parts fresh water and boil until tender, 45-60 minutes.

IN THE MORNING

Do quicker prep tasks like washing, chopping, boiling, and toasting.

STEP 1 WORK WITH YOUR ROUTINE

Pair food prep with a daily activity like your morning coffee, making lunches, or watching the news.

STEP 2 PUT IT ON THE CALENDAR

So you won't forget — and you can reschedule if the unexpected comes up. 15 minutes should do the trick.

STEP 3 PREP IN BULK

Slicing a few carrots is as fast as slicing one. Same with toasting almonds or chopping herbs.

TWO FOR ONE

Prep foods that will keep for a day or two, but not longer.

BREAKFAST

Scrambling eggs on Monday? Whisk six eggs instead of two, and store the extra liquid for Wednesday's omelettes.

LUNCH

Slice cucumber for today's hummus wrap, and extras for tomorrow's salad.

DINNER

Wash and chop kale for tonight's couscous, and extra for tomorrow's orzo salad.

IN A JAR

Keep these pre-mixed meals handy at home or work for instant breakfasts and lunches.

OATMEAL

In a large jar, combine uncooked oats with toppings like nuts, seeds, dried fruit, and spices. At breakfast time, simply scoop a serving into a pot, add water, and cook.

SALAD

Pour a serving of salad dressing into a large jar. Add toppings like sliced veggies, nuts, and cheese, then top with lettuce. Seal lid and store upright. Shake and eat.

DR. JOHN'S CHILI

Make it on Sunday and keep it in the fridge for fast meals all week long.

INGREDIENTS

- 4 lb extra lean ground beef (96%)
- 2 large onions, chopped
- 6 garlic cloves, chopped
- 4 tbsp chili powder

- 1 tsp cumin
- 2 tsp paprika
- 1 tsp celery seed
- 1 tsp fresh ground pepper
- 4 (15 1/2 ounce) cans kidney beans, drained and rinsed
- 2 large tomatoes, chopped

- 1 lb carrots, peeled and sliced
- 4 bell peppers: (green, red, yellow, orange) cut into 1/2-inch squares
- 2 (46 oz) bottles vegetable juice, spicy hot
- 1/2 cup cashew meal

INSTRUCTIONS

STEP 1

Brown ground beef over high heat with garlic and onions. Add spices and fry for 2 minutes.

STEP 2

Add browned beef, beans, tomatoes, carrots, peppers, and vegetable juice to a very large pot and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to simmer.

STEP 3

Pulse cashews in a blender until a grainy meal is formed.

STEP 4

Stir cashew meal into chili, cover, and simmer for an additional 30 minutes.

MAKES 10 SERVINGS.

No need to try all these strategies. Start slow, and do what works for you. Once you get in a rhythm, prepping meals in advance is really easy.