

THE IMPORTANCE OF MEAL PREPPING

It happens to all of us; you've put in a full day, it's time to start dinner and you're HUNGRY. You may not make the healthiest choices for dinner when you're starving but prepping your meals ahead of time can help you manage your eating in a sensible, enjoyable way.

It takes planning to reach your target weight, and meal prepping is part of a healthy lifestyle change. To maintain your weight, you'll need to create a healthy long-term habit and that involves eating foods you enjoy. With meal prepping, you can include nutrient-dense foods you like in moderate, balanced portions.

As spring and summer approaches, there are more fresh seasonal vegetables and fruits to choose for variety in meals.

First, start with a plan. Set aside part of a day to prep your meals for the next three to five days; food will stay about three days in the refrigerator, the rest can go into the freezer.

Choose the right containers: glass, metal, or plastic, depending on whether they need to be portable. If you take your food to work, choose a container or lunch bag with an ice pack.

Stock up on foods that are low in calories but high in nutrients. Include things high in fiber like beans and whole grains. Lean proteins like poultry, fish, eggs, and tofu are great ways to add flavor and bulk to your meal. Veggies and bagged greens like kale, spinach, and romaine help round out your meal. Keep olive oil and vinegars for dressings and try to incorporate fresh fruit. If you can't, dried or canned work great too!

To prevent monotony, try and create bowls with various combinations for each day. You could make a big batch of stew or soup, that can be frozen in small portions and eaten over the next month.

Cut steps by peeling, chopping, and slicing ahead of time and refrigerate or freeze for later use.

Find your favorites and remember why you're doing it: to avoid spur-of-the-moment hungry overeating and staying on track with your goals.