

Health and Wellness News

April 2019



The Art of Meal Prep

Meal prepping has become very popular, and for good reason. Have you tried it? Some people find it overwhelming, or get bored by eating the same thing all week. But, it doesn't have to be that way! There are many ways to meal prep that include variety, while still keeping you from spending an entire day in the kitchen.

Meal preparation offers great benefits:

- ◆ Saves you time during the week
- ◆ Saves you money by eating out less
- ◆ Makes it easier to exercise portion control
- ◆ Helps ensure you're eating nutritious, healthy meals
- ◆ Reduces calories and unhealthy ingredients that are a part of eating out

There are a variety of ways to meal prep. It's a matter of picking and choosing what will work best for you given your lifestyle and dietary preferences. Here are four popular methods:

◆ Make-Ahead Meals:

These can be refrigerated or frozen so they are ready when you need them. You can prepare any amount you'd like in advance. Some people make a whole week's worth of meals, but you can do as few or as many as you'd like. You may find it helpful to make a couple of dinners in advance, especially for those nights you may have to work late. Or you can simply prepare lunches for the week. Be flexible and experiment until you find what works best with your schedule.

◆ Batch Cooking:

This involves cooking larger portion of meals or ingredients. For example, cooking double or even triple portions of rice that you can use for various meals through the week is a great way to batch cook. Another idea is to make a larger than normal batch of soup and freeze some for the following week.

◆ Individually-Portioned Meals:

Preparing meals and portioning them into individual containers for the week is a great way to ensure portion control while saving time. Again, this method can be applied to breakfast, lunch, or dinner. Overnight oats work great as a breakfast meal prep, while Buddha bowls or mason jar salads work well for lunches.

◆ Ready-to-Cook Ingredients:

If the idea of preparing whole meals in advance doesn't appeal to you, at least prepping some of the ingredients is an option that can still save you some time. For example, you can wash, chop, and refrigerate the vegetables you'll be using throughout the week in advance. This will reduce prep time once it's time to cook dinner.



Whichever method you choose, meal prepping can help you spend less time in the kitchen and help you stick to healthy eating.

Ready to give it a try?



5 TIPS FOR MEAL PREPPING

1. Stick to a consistent schedule by picking a specific day of the week to plan, shop, and prep.
2. Decide how many and which types of meals you will prepare based on your schedule for the week.

3. Choose recipes that will work well for meal prep, keeping in mind the preparation methods. It helps to vary your recipes based on cooking method, trying not to cook too many meals that all require the same appliance.

4. Organize your time by starting with the meals or ingredients that will take longest to cook.



5. Be smart about storage by choosing food-safe containers that are glass or ceramic. Refrigerate what you will eat within the next 3-4 days, and freeze the rest.

EXERCISE OF THE MONTH Benefits of a Yoga Practice

Do you have a regular yoga practice? If not, here are some of the benefits to inspire you to give it a try or motivate you to do it more consistently.

What's so great about yoga?

Yoga is more than exercise. It's an overall wellness practice that incorporates deep breathing, relaxation, meditation, and mindfulness. It is great for stress reduction since it encourages you to feel centered and focused in the present moment.

It makes you stronger. Certain poses can improve muscle tone, strength and endurance. Poses like downward dog and plank build upper body strength, while standing poses build hamstrings, and quadriceps. Plus, most yoga poses build core strength.



It enhances flexibility. Yoga stretches can help improve your overall flexibility while decreasing muscle soreness and joint pain.

Yoga improves posture. When you're stronger and more flexible, your posture naturally improves. A regular yoga practice may help you become more aware of your body, which will help you notice when you're slouching or slumping.

Yoga is good for the heart. Yoga has been shown to lower blood pressure and slow heart rate. It has also been linked to lower cholesterol and triglycerides.

RECIPE OF THE MONTH Overnight Oats

Overnight oats are ideal for meal prep! Making several servings in mason jars on Sunday night will help save you time during your morning rush. Below is the basic recipe, followed by a few variations.

Ingredients:

- * 1/3 cup plain Greek yogurt
- * 1/2 cup rolled oats
- * 2/3 cup unsweetened milk of choice
- * 1 tablespoon chia seeds or ground flax seed
- * 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- * 1-2 tablespoons of maple syrup or honey



Source:

<https://wholefully.com/8-classic-overnight-oats-recipes-you-should-try/>



Directions:

1. Mix all ingredients together in a mason jar or small glass bowl with a tight-fitting lid.
2. Close jar or bowl and refrigerate overnight.

Here are some additional ingredients you can add to the basic recipe for more flavor and variety.

Chocolate Peanut Butter Overnight Oats

- * 2 tablespoons natural peanut butter* 2 tablespoons raw cacao powder

Pumpkin Spice Overnight Oats

- * 1/2 cup plain pumpkin puree* 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon* 1/8 teaspoon ground cloves* 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg

Strawberry Cheesecake Overnight Oats

- * 1/4 cup chopped fresh strawberries* 3 tablespoons softened cream cheese* Zest and juice of 1/2 lemon

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