

WHAT IS MEAL PREP?



To be effective with meal prep, you'll need an easy game plan for the week. Meal prepping doesn't need to be fancy or add more stress into your busy schedule. One-pot meals or roasting lean meats with vegetables can be simple dishes to make that don't require extensive hours in the kitchen and can provide you with multiple meals for those super busy days. Having an easy-to-follow plan can keep you on track and take the stress out of getting started with meal prep.

1 CHOOSE THE NUMBER OF MEALS PER DAY YOU WANT TO PREP FOR

Some people choose to prep only dinner, and others may prep three to six meals and include snacks. The level of detail is based on your lifestyle and time.

An athlete or high performing Marine may need a more detailed meal plan and prep process.

2 MAKE A MENU

Select your recipes/meals and place them on a calendar for each day. Keep a digital copy of the meal plan or print it out to hang on your refrigerator.

Pick recipes or meals that use common ingredients or seasonings.

3 SHOP FOR INGREDIENTS

Make a list of food items and products required to make the meals you have planned. Meal planning is beneficial for those on a budget. It helps to reduce food waste, control costs, and prevent impulse buying.

Explore local farmers markets: [National Farmers Market Directory](#) / [Agricultural Marketing Service \(usda.gov\)](#).

4 PREPARE YOUR MEALS

Prepare and cook the main dishes and side dishes for a specific number of days per week in advance.

Prep foods and meals you enjoy and know you will eat.

Benefits of Meal Planning

- Saves time and money, boosting overall financial fitness.
- Helps decrease the stress of last-minute planning and making poor food choices, boosting mental fitness.
- Promotes mindful food choices and food selections that enhance overall physical fitness.
- Improves time management, leaving more time to interact with family and friends, which boosts social fitness.