

MEAL PREP GUIDE



MEAL PREP FOR SUCCESS

LEARN THE TIPS AND TRICKS THE PRO'S HAVE
LEARNED FROM YEARS OF MEAL PREPPING.

You can have *some* success in fitness without meal prepping but, you won't make it far.

That doesn't mean you have to cook, weigh, and pack every ounce you ever consume to get in shape. There's a spectrum based on your goals, your timeline, your willingness, and your preferences.

On the surface, prepping your meals seems pretty easy. Cook it. Pack it. Eat it.

Unfortunately, the math sometimes confuses people (or gets tragically ignored) and they fail to recognize how hard it is to eat certain foods with a plastic fork!

There are a lot of things the average person misses when they start meal prepping. We're here to make sure you're set up for success!

For starters, "meal prepping" isn't a diet. That may sound silly to some of you but, we've definitely heard of someone thinking they're on the "meal prep diet" before.

This is you, being intentional about what goes in your body.

If you leave your weekly food intake up to "hungry you", your chances of succeeding are going to tank.

Hungry you don't care about your goals. They buddy up with "tired you" and sabotage your goals actually.

Meal prep is your armor against tired you and hungry you.

Prepping your meals also means you know what's in them. Truth is, restaurants and us guesstimating doesn't get us anywhere close to tracking our food correctly.

So, let's break down planning, grocery shopping, cooking, packing, and even eating your meal prep!

PLANNING:

MACROS, SCHEDULING, SAVINGS, RECIPES

The key to your success in meal prepping is sitting down, with a pen and paper, and planning! This makes the rest of this process SO. MUCH. EASIER.

So let's start with your portion sizes and food categories:

If you haven't already, it's a great idea to read our article on tracking and planning macros. If you haven't and you want to get started then we recommend:

- 1) Promising you'll read it and take our **5 Day Diet Makeover**
- 2) Plan for 0.7g-1.2g of protein per pound of body weight per day
- 3) 4oz to 8oz of carbohydrate per meal based on activity level.

Disclaimer You can prep healthy meals without knowing your macronutrient goals but, since you're already there, it doesn't hurt to have a good idea of your portion sizes!

Once you know how many grams of protein, fats, and carbohydrates you need for your goals (and therefore the number of calories you'll need since macros = calories in different packages),

you have to decide your food choices! 80% of your calories should come from whole foods. As you may have learned in our **5 Day Diet Makeover**, it's nearly impossible to be healthy and hit your goals otherwise.

That's probably why you're meal prepping through! For a concise list of whole foods, you can download our **Whole Food Diet** guide free!

When you're planning your meal prep, however, we plan around our protein source!

Once you've planned how you'll get your protein each day, you can add the necessary carbohydrate and fat sources. Don't forget about your micronutrients either! That means nuts, berries, and veggies everywhere you can squeeze them in!

Next, look at your schedule. What times of the day each day are hardest for you to get good nutrition? Is it dinner time when you're tired when getting home from work? Is it breakfast? Do you need snacks during long stretches between eating so you don't gorge at your next meal?

Identify your weak points and plan to meal prep for those meals first!

PLANNING:

MACROS, SCHEDULING, SAVINGS, RECIPES

Before you make your whole plan, if you want to save a little money, now is the time to look at the sale ads for your local grocery store.

If there are protein sources, fruit, or vegetables you can use for your meal prep that are on sale, that's a big bonus!

Okay, now it's time to put pen to paper and make your plan.

Decide how many meals you're going to need for this round. If you're just starting out we don't recommend trying to prep every single meal for the week. It can get overwhelming and make meal prepping seem like a hassle. It doesn't have to be all or nothing!

We're big fans of small improvements over time in all areas of health and fitness; that applies here too!

If you're planning for 2 meals a day, for 5 days a week and you know you need 30g of protein per meal, you'll need to buy 300g of protein at the grocery store!

Almost all protein sources contain around 20g

of protein per 4oz raw. In pounds, that's 80g of protein per pound of raw weight. So, you would need $300g / 80g = 3.75$ pounds of protein!

That isn't exact but, it gives you a good guide of how much to buy. You'll get the numbers right when you prep your food!

These are things you'll be able to do very quickly in your head with a little practice!

This may also help you decide if you're making 1.5x, 2x or 3x a recipe and thus, how much of the other ingredients you'll need.

Our recommendation is to keep your meals simple. A protein source, a carb source, a fat source if needed, and veggies. There are hundreds of different ways to combine beef rice and different vegetables, herbs, and spices.

After knowing your macro or calorie goals, deciding how many meals you're going to prepare, and what is going to go into each meal, you're ready to shop.

SHOPPING:

SUCCESSFUL SHOPPING TIPS

This is a part of meal prep we often overlook! Obviously, we can't cook anything if we never bring it home but, there's also a few keys to our shopping trip that can make or break us!

First thing first, set a budget! Even if you go over here and there, setting a cap on our grocery spending keeps us honest to what we **need**.

This also frames our spending differently. Spending money on better foods shouldn't be seen as an extra expense. *Those* are the essentials! The reses puffs and ice cream are the extras.

This brings up the next most important point: don't bring home what you know shouldn't be going into your body.

Convenience foods are what we'll reach for when we are tired, super hungry, or unmotivated. These are the foods your brain will crave and you'll consume instead of your meal prep.

The very best way to keep that from happening, thus keeping you from reaching your goals, is to never bring them home in the first place!

Stick to your plan, don't bring home the things you know are going to detract from your goals.

While this seems restrictive on the surface, what we're actually doing is making the times we enjoy meals at a restaurant with friends or homemade deserts on a holiday more enjoyable.

If we "treat ourselves" every week, it isn't treating ourselves, it's just a lifestyle.

That means when we do enjoy these foods, they're less special. Not to mention, they cost us our health, and losing our health means we don't get to fully enjoy the people we are supposed to be sharing these foods with!

COOKING:

BETTER FOOD MEANS BETTER SUCCESS

You want to know why so many people have trouble meal prepping consistently? Apart from the math or scheduling it in, it's because they don't make food that tastes good!

For some reason, a lot of people believe that healthy food shouldn't taste great. They don't utilize seasonings or pay attention to their cooking methods when cooking healthy food and consequently, don't enjoy their prep!

The truth is great tasting is important. That said, we want you to see food more and more for its nutritional value. Because when that happens, you look at "unhealthy" foods differently as they are completely nutrient-void.

Remember, learning to cook your foods takes time and practice. It's super common to hear someone doesn't like a food when in reality, they just don't like how they prepare it!

Lastly, before we get to some cooking tips, remember that if you are eating a highly-processed diet, your taste buds are desensitized due to the huge amounts of flavor processed foods provide.

This is why when someone only drinks pop, they think water tastes absolutely terrible. Give your taste-buds time! Before long, you'll find the vegetables on your plate, with a little salt and olive oil, is one of the best things you've ever eaten!

Now, let's talk about cooking your meal prep!

There are three different methods you can use to prep your food. No one is necessarily better than the other, although one may be more "precise" than the other but, those are details you'll worry about much later.

Method 1: Meal by Meal

You can prep each item in your meal prep individual and assemble each meal one by one, weighing them each as you do so. This makes the most exact meal prep.

Method 2: Bulk cook and eyeball

My personal favorite! If i know i need 4 meals with 6oz of beef, for example. I'll cook 24oz of beef, get out four containers, and eyeball making them each as close as possible. I repeat this with each item in my meal prep.

COOKING:

BETTER FOOD MEANS BETTER SUCCESS

Method 3: Bulk cook & assemble later

The least time consuming and a more exact way of prepping your food. Again, lets say you need 4 meals of 6oz of beef. You would cook 24oz and place it all in a container.

Each time you eat, you would get out that container, weigh out your beef, rice, vegetables, and add whatever extra you need to your prep.

This is a good way to utilize leftovers as well. If you cook a protein for dinner and make double, you can simply cook your veggies or carb source separately and combine the leftover proteins and your prepped veggies or carb sources to make a whole new meal prep!

It takes some trial and error to find what's best for you and your schedule!

Cooking tips:

- Modify already tasty recipes to be lower sugar or use bigger protein portions.

- Don't overcook your meats! You'll be reheating this again, partially cooking it, in the microwave later so, if it's already dry, it's only going to get worse.

- Cut up your food *before* cooking. This means a faster cook time and you won't have to struggle to cut your food using plastic silverware when you're eating it.

- Slice chicken into thinner pieces. Again, faster cook time and less time to dry out in the pan, grill, or oven.

- Don't leave your food out too long before sealing and storing it. This causes your meal prep to dry out making it less pleasant to eat when reheated.

EATING:

PACK WELL AND BREATHE

Finally, it's time to eat your healthy meals! To make sure you have the best experience, be sure to bring salt, real silverware if possible, and condiments in packets.

Before eating, take 15 seconds to deep breathe. This will settle your nervous system and allow for better digestion. 5 big, deep nasal breathes is sometimes all it takes to de-stress before a meal.

When stress is high our digestion is impaired and thus our nutrient uptake goes down. That means you don't get what you need from your food and your health suffers.

Take a moment before each meal to settle yourself, deep breathe, and enjoy your meal!

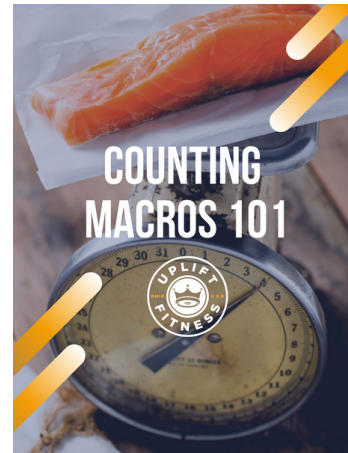
RESOURCES

CLICK TO ACCESS GUIDES

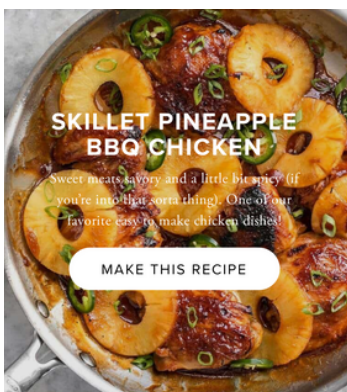
WHAT FOODS SHOULD I
BE EATING?



HOW MUCH SHOULD I BE
EATING EACH DAY?



WHERE CAN I FIND
HEALTHY RECIPES?



WHAT IF I'M TIRED OF
"DIETING"?



CHECKLIST

- Decide your daily food intake:

Protein:

Fats:

Carbohydrates

(Remember $P \times 4 + C \times 4 + F \times 9 = \text{total calories}$)

- Assess your schedule to decide what times and days you need to prep meals for:

- Decide how many meals you'll prep for each day:

- For a total of how many meals per week?

- Divide your macronutrient intake by the number of meals you'll eat each day:

(this is your meal totals)

Protein:

Fats:

Carbohydrates:

- Make your shopping list:

NEED HELP?

If you need an extra hand figuring out your ideal macronutrient intake or just help in general with your nutrition (and exercise), we highly recommend a coach!

We have coaches ourselves (even though we know what we're doing) because we know the value in having an extra, objective set of eyes on your progress!

But, **beware**, the internet hands out the title "personal trainer" to almost anyone. Finding an ultra qualified, compassionate, professional to help you, can feel impossible.

That's why we have a team of them ready to work with you right here at Uplift Fitness!

Click below to learn more about hiring an Uplift Fitness Certified Coach!

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