

Meal Planning

Scheduling

Grab your planner and put the following into your calendar:

- Meal planning time (30 min/week)
- Meal times: Breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks. (15-45 min each)
- Grocery shopping time (40-90 min)
- Food prep/cooking time:
 - Be realistic about when this is possible.
 - Try timing yourself to see how long it takes you to cook various meals.
 - Don't forget clean up time.
- Keep these scheduled times as regular as possible to make them part of your routine

Meal Planning Time

1. Look in your kitchen to see if there are any perishable ingredients that need to be used up.
2. Look at your schedule and figure out how many breakfasts, lunches, dinners, and snacks you need to prepare before your next shopping trip.
3. Decide what to eat for each meal and snack, noting the ingredients needed for each.
4. Double check to see which ingredients you already have, and then add needed items to your grocery list.

Meal Planning Tips

- Don't try too many new foods or recipes at once. Make most of your meals familiar and easy to prepare. If you are trying a new recipe, make sure to read all the way to the end to avoid surprises later!
- Consolidate meal prep work:
 - Prep multiple meals at once to prevent relentless cycles of cooking and cleaning.
 - Do prep tasks such as washing and chopping vegetables right after grocery shopping to cut down on cleaning and prep time during the week
- Keep a basic stock of non-perishable items on hand for times when you aren't able to shop. For example:
 - On the shelf: pasta, marinara sauce, rice, canned tuna, nut butters, beans, lentils, soups, oatmeal, soy milk, cereal
 - In the freezer: frozen vegetables, fruits, meats (or veg proteins), sliced bread. If you have extra beans or grains after cooking, freeze them.

Contact us

Health Promotion
2010 Tang Center
Berkeley, CA 94720
uhs.berkeley.edu/hp
uhs.berkeley.edu/healthcoaching

Make an appointment with a health coach

Online: etang.berkeley.edu
In-person: Appointment Office
Phone: 510-642-2000, press 4 then 1



More tips

- Maintain a list of snacks and meals you enjoy to refer to when you're making a grocery list and feel uninspired.
- Keep a grocery list on your phone or fridge. Add items to your list when you run out or when meal inspiration hits.
- Repetition of meals is great for cutting down on planning and prep time, but know your limit, because if you get too bored you'll be tempted to stop following your plan.

- Use more perishable items earlier in the week when possible.
 - Fruits, vegetables, herbs, and meat last longer when you store them properly
 - Longer lasting fresh foods: Potatoes, sweet potatoes, carrots, apples, onions, garlic, eggs, cheese, yogurt, nut butters.
- To cut down on cooking time, focus your efforts on making large batches of meals that freeze and reheat well.
 - Freeze in individual portions to make transport and reheating easier
 - Soups, stews, and items high in liquid tend to freeze well
- If part of your plan is to take snacks or meals to-go, make sure you schedule time to prep and pack.
 - Make ahead breakfasts: Overnight oats, breakfast/egg muffins, frittata, hard boiled eggs + fruit
 - Pack items that tend to get soggy in a separate container

“Whoa! I don’t think I can do all of this!”

Don’t worry; you don’t have to do it all at once. Begin by giving yourself credit for everything you are already doing. Then, pick one manageable change you’d like to focus on.

Ask yourself, “What will it take to make this change happen?” One way to answer this is by picturing yourself doing it, and identifying potential challenges or preparations that will need to take place.

Then, work on implementing this change for a few weeks. Track your progress, and notice what happens with curiosity rather than judgment. Experiment, and make adjustments to your plan if needed.

If you were successful with making a change, great! Keep it up, and choose your next change to focus on. Steady progress will have more of a lasting effect than making a huge change all at once.

TANG TIP:

Tang Tip: If you’re still struggling with making a change after a few weeks, seek support. Health coaching is perfect for helping you get unstuck, but you could also talk to the people in your life who seem to have a handle on meal planning, and see what they have to say.