**Time Saving Tips in the Kitchen!**

- Cut vegetables and store them in zip lock bags or storage containers.
- Clear counter space so you have room to work and organize the kitchen for easy access of utensils.
- Prepare multiple meals at once and freeze the extra food that you can reheat at a later date.
- Make enough meat for 3 days and store in containers. Grab what you need for each meal for that day.
- Make all the grains and starches for the week at once and store them in zip lock bags.
- Organize the refrigerator so you can find food and make meals quickly. Also, to avoid wasting food because you can’t find it.
- Buy reusable ice packs or blocks and throw them in your food cooler or bag to keep the food fresh when your at work.
- Clean as you go! Fill the sink up with soapy water, wash the dishes as you go.¹

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**MEAL PREP IDEAS**

**Pick one from each category:**

**Protein:** lean meat size of palm: chicken breast, turkey, hard boiled eggs or 1/2 cup of beans  
**Fat:** half an avocado, cook with olive oil (thumb size a serving), or tablespoon of peanut butter  
**Grain or starch:** rice, potatoes, pasta (size of fist a serving)  
**Veggies:** two hand-fulls per meal, no butter  
**Fruit for dessert:** apple, banana, or berries  
**Snacks:** Vegetables and hummus, string cheese and an apple, yogurt and handful of almonds, or peanut butter and 1 piece of whole grain toast.

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**References**

3. USDA ChooseMyPlate Website, 2017
Plan to eat Breakfast and Dinner at home.
Eating the meals you prepare at home will ensure that you are eating better quality food that is full of fiber, lean protein, and whole grains in order to get the proper nutrients that is needed each day.

“Meal prep can reduce stress as you avoid last minute decisions about what to eat, or rushed preparation.”¹

Bring two snacks and a Lunch to work.
Eating throughout the day healthy meals you have prepared at home will help you to avoid the temptation of unhealthy food that is in the office, like candy, cakes, and fast food.

Avoid buying convenient food.
When you are out running errands or away from home, try to bring snacks or small meals with you that can be stashed in a purse, bag, or trunk. This is so you don’t resort to fast food that is full of added sugar, salt, and saturated fat. Also, retail stores often provide opportunities for “impulse buys” at the cash register like chocolate, chips, candies and sodas that are highly processed, high in sugar and fat with low nutrient value.²

Prepping food for the week actually gives you more free time!
Taking a few hours twice a week to prepare all your meals for the week will allow you to have extra time because you won’t be cooking each night or rushing around trying to find your next meal. You can use the extra time for recreational activities, spend time with friends and family, or get more sleep!

Once you set a routine of planning, shopping, and preparing meals, you will feel less stressed because you will be eating healthier and have more time to relax, which can reduce anxiety. The hardest part is starting a new routine, but you will get the hang of it in no time!

You will learn to improve your time management skills and realize how easy making meals can be when you are prepared with the ingredients. Also, studies suggest that meal prep can help with weight control, as you decide the ingredients and the portions served. This can contribute to an overall more nutritionally balanced diet.¹