

# Meal Planner

**Meal Planning is an important part of trying to follow a healthy lifestyle. Planning our meals for the week gives us the best chance of ensuring we have a mix of all the nutrients your bodies require to perform its daily tasks.**

Planning your meals for the week enables you to reduce food waste and reduces the amount of money you spend on food in a week.

It is important to make 2-3 changes to your weekly plan each week to ensure the meals we eat don't become too repetitive as this can cause us to become dissatisfied with what we eat.

The below 5 tips can ensure your meal planning is successful:

1. Planning takes time and concentration. So make sure you set this time aside weekly & find a way that works for you. This could involve a spreadsheet and time out your laptop, it could be an app on your phone or it could be a trusty pen and paper.
2. Don't focus on food and meals alone. There can be lots of different aspects in our lives that can impact on our meals, e.g. taking the kids to clubs, working late, going to our own exercise classes. On busy days; it may be unrealistic to think we can prepare a full Sunday dinner however; you may have time the day before to bulk cook stew so its waiting for those busy days.
3. Check the ingredients you have in your cupboard, fridge and freezer before you plan your weeks meals. It can be helpful to do your shopping list at the same time as planning your meals.
4. Include your favourite meals as well as some new recipes or meals you haven't tried in a while.
5. Cook in bulk but be smart with your ingredients. If you have bulk made spaghetti bolognese, you don't have to eat pasta 3 days in a row, you could have bolognese in a jacket potato or wrap to mix the dish up. Also; get hold of some Tupperware dishes and make sure you freeze any left overs to re-heat on your busy days.
6. Don't forget to defrost - getting into a system of pulling out meal ingredients every 2-3 days or pulling out those bulk cooked left overs can be really helpful. When we get in from work and are tired or find our fridges empty this can be a real danger moment for calling a take away.



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