

## Meal planning and prepping for success!

I am beyond excited to get this meal planning and prepping hack pack into your hands!

Meal prep may not be sexy. Meal planning may sound like more of a chore and a limiter of freedom than the key to fitness success that it really is.

But I guarantee that this information, when applied, is what makes my fitness go from average to stellar!

PLUS, this system frees up so much time and mental energy, y'all! I am not exaggerating when I say that this meal planning and prepping system is literally how I was able to complete my Master's degree without outgrowing my clothes, overspending my food budget, and losing my mind.

So let's get to it. Happy planning!



- *Coach Corey*

There can often be what feels like an unpassable chasm between knowing and doing.

That principle is proven out, time and again, in weight loss efforts. It can also be what makes the difference between weight loss maintenance and reversion.

More than 80% of people that lose weight on purpose gain it all back according to the National Weight Loss Registry.

That can be staggering and even discouraging. But I get excited when I see statistics like that.

Because about 20% DID keep it off. What can we learn from them?

Successful maintainers have learned that the best way to permanently cross the chasm between knowing and doing is to make doing the only option. When you habitually remove failure from the equation, the only possible outcome is success.

Enter meal planning and prepping.

Two crucial habits that practically guarantee weight loss and maintenance success are meal planning and pre-cooking.

Budget-minded cooks have used meal planning strategies for generations. You may already use a grocery list to guide your shopping (and you can find a list template in this hack pack as well). Meal planning takes that organizational strategy a step further by guiding what you put on your list and using everything you buy. It's a way to make sure you stick to your meal plan by having the foods you need on hand.

*But meal planning incomplete by itself.*

You can make a meal plan and a shopping list as carefully as possible, and buy only what's on the list - but failure is still an option if you get swept away in the whirlwind of activity we call LIFE and don't have time to make your meals.

Unless you learn how to plan, portion, and prepare your own healthy meals, you will find it extremely difficult to maintain weight loss.

The thing that makes meal planning and careful shopping a complete strategy is prepping your meals in advance, or meal prep. It's a strategy that bodybuilders and physique athletes have used for years. And it's now a vital tool in your toolbox.

Resource: [Foods to Choose List](#), [grocery list template](#)

## Plan

Plan breakfast, lunch, dinners, and snacks using the Foods to Choose list. If you don't mind eating the same foods for each meal every day (same breakfast, same lunch, etc. for a week) more power to you. I tend to need a bit more variety, so I plan for that.

The dead-simple way to make this work, especially when you're getting started, is to put together individual items in your meals. This looks like a grilled chicken breast atop a green salad with tomatoes and olive oil vinaigrette, or a portion of steak with a portion of baked potato with a side of sautéed greens or broccoli, or a half turkey sandwich on one slice of sprouted grain bread with a side of grape tomatoes and celery sticks.

Make 2-4 weekly meal plans to have on rotation. Seasonal fruits and vegetables will bring your produce spend down. Save these and their associated grocery lists for easy access.

Resource: [plug and play meal plan template](#)

Another tip? Color code your meals on your meal plan, so you can know at a glance that you are getting adequate variety. For example, we color coded dinners to begin with according to the type of meats we were using – chicken was tan, pork was a light blue/white, salmon was – well, salmon, beef red, etc. If you eat any version of a plant-based diet, you may want to do this with your vegetables to make sure you're tasting the rainbow of produce (not skittles.)

You'll see that the meal plan template already has color coding for your convenience. Use this as it fits your lifestyle.

## Portion

Also vital to successfully controlling or losing weight is to eat portions that are appropriate for you. But if you've been eating haphazardly – too much sometimes, not enough others – how do you know what good portions are?!

A good place to start is right at the end of your arm. Yep, your hand.

Resource: [Fist-Palm Infographic](#)

Review the fist-palm infographic to learn how this powerful portion tool that you carry with you everywhere can help you plan meals and snacks of the right size for you.

Snacks are crucial to plan! That's where most people run into trouble. Carry healthy snacks with you in your backpack, purse, briefcase or car, leave them in your desk drawer, and

other hiding places so you're never without a healthy choice when hunger strikes away from home.

Plan meals that you can make in advance, so that packing it for work or putting it on the table after work is so simple that fast food would be an inconvenience.

Make your list

Know what you need for your meal plan before you shop. Also know what you already have on hand so you don't duplicate or over-buy.

Make your list, then take inventory of your pantry, refrigerator, and freezer. We call this "shop the pantry."

Time Hack: Order your groceries and pick them up or have them delivered.

## Prep

It is always more efficient to prepare several meals in one four-hour event than it is to prepare one meal in a 30- or 45-minute kitchen event. Think about it: each time you cook, you must also clean, thus making the short kitchen session more like 60-90 minutes for one meal. Doing that only once every day adds up to more than 10 hours a week!

Instead, you could combine pre-cooking four or five large dishes that can be portioned into multiple servings and meals, into one kitchen event, with only one dish-washing episode. You can easily reduce that 10+ hour commitment by half each week. Not bad!

Take-away? Never cook only one meal at a time. At least double dinner so you can put half of it in the freezer for next week.

Everything you need is washed, perfectly portioned, and ready to grab when you're packing up for the day, thus saving you time in the mornings without relying on meals out.

No more fast food lunches for you, when you have delicious homecooked meals on the ready.

No more foraging for snacks when you're distracted by pressing tasks and to-do lists.

No more decision fatigue, because you already know what to eat!

And (bonus) no more food waste and broken food budgets!

If you are new to advanced meal prepping, plan for some added expense on the front end, as you will need to stock up on packaging items, foods, and perhaps cooking supplies. With that in mind, plan to deploy this strategy at the beginning of a pay period, and budget accordingly. The initial meal prep session may be a bit intimidating, if you are unaccustomed to assembly-line

cooking, but it will become a time-saving habit, and you'll be amazed at how easy it makes sticking to your healthy eating plan.

Additional tips can be found in the following table.

### Meal prep tips!

Fruit (buy in season)	Vegetables (buy in season)	Crockpot meals	Oven meals	Miscellaneous
Wash hard fruits; place in a bowl where you can see it, so it's easy to get to.	Wash when you get home with your bounty.	Choose recipes with ingredients found on The List (page 37).	Choose recipes that use ingredients on The List.	Build an inventory of airtight containers and Ziploc baggies of various sizes.
Wash all berries right before eating/ packing for the day for optimal freshness and longevity.	Cut hard vegetables and portion into Ziploc baggies with nuts for easy-access snacks.	Always make double/triple recipes. Leftovers can be lunches for the week, or frozen for up to three months.	Always make double/triple recipes.	Stock up on meats when on sale, and plan one large meal prep session to stock your freezer at the beginning of your pay period.
Portion and thaw frozen fruits.	Tear lettuces, cut cabbage; store in large Ziploc bags or sealable bowls with a paper towel.	Package leftovers in individual portions for faster reheating and to avoid waste.	Leftovers can be lunches for the week, or frozen for up to three months.	Label everything (food name and date) before freezing.
Cut and cube melons, package in portions.	Roast or saute (squashes, greens, cruciferous) using high-heat oils, broths, and vinegars. Store with protein and V2 for meals on the go.	Leftovers are safe to eat when stored in airtight containers refrigerated for 3-5 days, and in the freezer for three months.	Package leftovers in individual portions for faster reheating and to avoid waste.	Create a 3-4 week meal rotation. Make a list for each week. Check your pantry and refrigerator for items you already have prior to your shopping trip.