

The background of the image is a top-down view of a white marble surface. It features several meal prep containers. In the top left, a clear glass rectangular container holds cooked chicken pieces, a piece of salmon with a grid pattern, and broccoli florets. In the top right, another clear glass rectangular container contains sliced salmon, cherry tomatoes, fresh basil leaves, and three slices of whole-grain bread. In the bottom right, a clear glass rectangular container is filled with rice, chicken pieces topped with sesame seeds, and broccoli. In the bottom left, a clear glass round bowl contains sliced red and yellow apples. To the left of the central text, a pink water bottle is partially visible. To the right, a yellow water bottle is partially visible. A bunch of green grapes is also visible on the right side. The central text is overlaid on a white rectangular background.

Meal Plan *Mastery*

LEARN HOW TO
SYSTEMATIZE YOUR
WEEKLY MEAL PLANNING
FOR EASE AND SIMPLICITY.

BUILD THE SYSTEM

Getting started

Cooking, shopping, and planning for healthy eating each week can feel like a never ending maze, consuming your precious time. With this system you can banish the kitchen chaos and escape the decision fatigue.

Being prepared for the week, knowing what you will eat, can save you so much time each day. Having a method that you stick with each week can make it so much easier.

Life can be unpredictable, and schedules might change throughout the year. When this happens, come back to these initial steps to tweak your system. This means minimal time spent on the front end, to shave off loads of time on the back end. ✨

Five Steps to Developing Your Unique Meal Plan System

Step 1: Review your calendar for availability.

- Step 2: Schedule your meal themes and create your system.
- Step 3: Collect and organize recipes.
- Step 4: Meal plan for the week.
- Step 5: Meal prep for success.
-

Set aside 30 - 60 minutes to go through this five step process and save yourself hours on the backend. You do not need to do it all at once, so don't hesitate to get started.

Systematize for Success

STEP 1: REVIEW YOUR CALENDAR

Get Clear on Your Week

We all have different commitments that will affect our ability to shop or cook on certain days. In this step you will review your monthly calendar and get a clear visual of when you will be too busy to cook, and when you will have the time for your culinary creations.

Here is What To Do On The Calendar (Next Page)

- Open your own appointment/commitments calendar and have this ready to review.
Print out the calendar on the next page which is where you will start to
- visualize your weeks ahead.
Get a green, yellow, and red pencil/marker (if you do not have this, don't fret. Just use the letters G, Y, and R to signify these colors). Green is going to
- symbolize that you have time to make that meal during the meal time.
Yellow will signify limited time. Red means you have no time to cook during that meal time.
On the calendar you will see B, L, and D, which stand for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. While reviewing your commitments calendar go through each meal and circle in green, yellow, or red based on the time you have to cook
- during that meal time.
 - For example: If on Monday you go to work earlier than usual you might circle this red. If on Tuesday evening you have a school meeting, you would circle this red. If you work from home some days and are able to take 10 minutes to make yourself lunch at the lunch hour, you would circle these meals yellow. Green would be for meals that you are generally available to cook for at least 30 minutes.

STEP 1: AVAILABILITY CALENDAR

Week 1

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
B	B	B	B	B	B	B
L	L	L	L	L	L	L
D	D	D	D	D	D	D

Week 2

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
B	B	B	B	B	B	B
L	L	L	L	L	L	L
D	D	D	D	D	D	D

Week 3

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
B	B	B	B	B	B	B
L	L	L	L	L	L	L
D	D	D	D	D	D	D

Week 4

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
B	B	B	B	B	B	B
L	L	L	L	L	L	L
D	D	D	D	D	D	D

STEP 2: SCHEDULE YOUR MEAL THEMES

Now that you have a general idea of what your weeks for this month will look like in regards to your outside engagements and your time to cook, it is time to schedule your meal types.

IF YOU CAN KEEP EVERY WEEK THE SAME, THIS WILL MAKE YOUR LIFE SO MUCH EASIER. This will give you a consistent meal system and eliminate any decision fatigue. If this is the case, only fill out one week on the calendar on the next page.

You know which meals you can not cook for, so you can schedule accordingly. Here are some options of meal types for meals you can't prepare at that time: Crockpot meals to start the morning of or even overnight, grab n' go meals, pre-made meals that you have cooked earlier in the week, and lastly left overs from the day before.

Example Themes You Can Use

- Left overs
 - Crockpot meal
 - Pre-made meal (this could include a meal that you are able to make ahead of time, such as soup, or hardboiled eggs with cut fruit)
 - Grab n' Go (this would be something you don't have to prepare such as a yogurt, banana, and peanut butter)
 - Overnight Oats
- Taco night
 - Asian cuisine
 - Pasta night
 - Salad night
 - Pancakes
 - Breakfast for dinner
 - Seafood
 - Vegetarian
 - Soup and sandwich night
 - Eat Out

Okay, Let's Write The Plan

- Print out the calendar on the next page.
- Use the previous calendar with your green, yellow, and red indications to plan and write down which meal theme you will make for each meal.
- **Once again, if you can keep each week the same, this is a huge win! Don't over complicate your meal plan system. The simpler, the better.**
- You can also view the sample week to see an example of how this is done.

STEP 2 CONTINUED: MEAL SYSTEM

Sample Week

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
B Pancakes	B Overnight Oats	B Egg dish	B Overnight Oats	B Egg dish	B Pancakes	B Eat Out
L Asian	L Soup	L Leftovers	L Grab n Go	L Grab n Go	L Salad	L Salad
D Vegetarian	D Leftovers	D Tacos	D Leftovers	D Crockpot	D Leftovers	D Seafood

Week 1

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
B	B	B	B	B	B	B
L	L	L	L	L	L	L
D	D	D	D	D	D	D

Week 2

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
B	B	B	B	B	B	B
L	L	L	L	L	L	L
D	D	D	D	D	D	D

Week 3

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
B	B	B	B	B	B	B
L	L	L	L	L	L	L
D	D	D	D	D	D	D

Week 4

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
B	B	B	B	B	B	B
L	L	L	L	L	L	L
D	D	D	D	D	D	D

STEP 3: COLLECT RECIPES

Good job! **You have completed your meal plan system.** You should not have to do those steps again for a while, until you have a major schedule change. Now that you have a meal plan system and you know which types of meals you will be making each week, it is time to collect some simple recipes to easily refer back to. You can do this in the following ways.

Print and Organize

If you like to have things on paper, print out several recipes for each meal theme you chose, and organize them in a binder.

Save in One File

If you are more tech savvy, you can save meals in one file with subfolders for each category on your phone or computer. This makes the meals easy to search and find.

Bookmark Recipes

You can bookmark recipes on the internet that you like and tag them into subcategories. Or create a Pinterest board for each meal type.

Star or tag your favorite meals each week to easily go back to these recipes for future weeks.



TIME SAVING HACKS

For healthy eating

When life gets busy, eating healthy can feel daunting. But with the right tricks, preparing healthy meals *doesn't* need to feel like a part-time job. Here are 8 time-saving tips to make healthy eating more doable.



Weekend meal prep

Setting aside an hour or two for meal prep on the weekend can be a game changer during the week. Easy to prep ideas include mason jar salads, overnight oats, chia pudding, egg muffins, sheet pan meats, and shredded chicken.



Batch cooking

If you're taking the time to cook, you might as well do double duty. Meaning if you're preparing a soup, make a double batch and freeze the extras. You can even batch cook staples like quinoa, rice, and beans and freeze some for later.



Crockpot meals

Crockpot meals not only make large portions, they're very hands off. Just dump your ingredients, go on with your day, and a few hours later, dinner is served. For some healthy crockpot inspiration, check out this recipe roundup.



Healthy frozen meals

Yes, home cooked is best. But in a pinch, it's nice to have some quick, easy meals on hand. For frozen meals, [Tattooed Chef](#), [Saffron Road](#), [Amy's Kitchen](#), and [Primal Kitchen](#) have healthy options. Also, plain frozen veggies such as edamame can save you time cooking.



Healthy meal kits Meal kit services deliver ready-to-make ingredients so you can whip together tasty meals fast. Check out [Green Chef](#), [Trifecta Nutrition](#), [Daily Harvest](#), & [Thistle](#).



Pre-portioned snacks

No need to divvy up snacks when you buy them pre-portioned. By pre-portioned snacks such as [Simple Mills](#) almond crackers, individual hummus cups, and individually portioned nuts.



Buy precut fruits and veggies

Homecooked meals are *much* easier to prepare when your ingredients are chopped, washed, and ready to go. Most grocery stores sell precut veggies.



Smoothies One of the simplest ways to flood your body with nutrients FAST. Save even more time by prepping frozen smoothie bags, just toss in the blender, add some nut milk, and blend.

STEP 5: MEAL PREP

Write down what you will need to do for meal prep to be prepared for each day. For example: if you have overnight oats on your calendar for Monday, you will need to prepare this on Sunday evening to have it ready for Monday. If you are having a crockpot dinner on Thursday evening, you will need to start the crockpot on Thursday morning.

At the start of the week you may also plan to precook some foods such as grilled chicken to have on salad or rice to be had with dinner. Grains such as rice and quinoa store well in the freezer and can be made ahead of time.

See the Sample Meal Prep Weekly Plan below for an example. This coincides with the sample meal system from earlier.

Sunday

- Make a double batch of pancakes and freeze half to be had for breakfast again on Friday.
- Prepare overnight oats to be had on Monday morning.
- Make a double batch of dinner to leave leftovers for Monday evening.
- Make soup to be had for lunch on Monday and Tuesday.

Tuesday

- Prepare overnight oats to be had on Wednesday morning.
- Make a double batch of dinner to leave leftovers for Wednesday evening.

Thursday

- Start crockpot in the morning and make a double batch to leave leftovers for Friday evening.
- Cook protein to be had with salad at lunch on Friday and Saturday.

No prep needed on Monday, Wednesday, Friday, or Saturday.



Use the page below for your Meal Prep Plan

STEP 5: MEAL PREP

Write what you will need to do each day to have success with your meal plan.

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

YOUR WORK IS COMPLETE

You did it! **You've finished your meal plan system and created a clear plan for this week.**

The amazing thing is that you can reuse this exact plan in future weeks and the plan coincides with your busy schedule.

Was there some work upfront? Of course. But, if you can utilize this system week after week, you will save so much time, effort, and frustration. It will help you stay on track with healthy eating and help you avoid the last minute decisions which can be disastrous.

Pat yourself on the back and post your meal plan system in the kitchen to refer back to week after week.

