

Paleo Scaleo's

MEAL PLANNING TIPS

We all think about meal prep with the best of intentions. But sometimes, it can just feel darn overwhelming. Use these 5 steps to make meal prep easy and you'll be breezing through the kitchen in no time!

1. Decide what you're going to make BEFORE going shopping.

This is the #1 key to meal planning! If you walk into the store without a plan, you're going to walk out without the right things. Pick the recipes you want to make, then make a shopping list based off those recipes. Group the list by category: produce, meats, dry goods, etc. Then hit the store, grab what you need, and head home.

2. Think logically about the prep steps before getting started.

Once you're home from the store, if you plan on doing prep right then, don't put everything away just to pull it back out in random order. Think about the things you're making, and what needs to be done. Prioritize the tasks that take the longest to be done first. If something can't be fully cooked or made right then and there, try to do some initial prep to make the steps later in the week easier. Chopping veggies and cooking meat can go a long way towards making the right choice on a night you're tired versus ordering a pizza.

3. Simplify, simplify, simplify!

Do you have one recipe that calls for baked sweet potatoes, another for shredded chicken? One recipe that includes a diced bell pepper, and another that includes sliced onions? Don't work recipe by recipe, from start to finish – you'll be in the kitchen all day long. Look at the steps for all the recipes or meals you're making, then simplify. Pop your chicken breasts in the oven at 350° while you chop veggies. (Hint: Do ALL the chopping at once! It will seem tedious but is way more efficient.) Chicken is done? Take it out, turn the oven up to 400°, and put the sweet potatoes in while you shred the

chicken and finish your chopping, or make a sauce, or assemble a dish. Think about what steps don't need constant attention, get those started, and move on to the next.

4. Remove distractions.

You know how this goes. You're in the middle of chopping vegetables, and you can't remember – was it 1 cup or 2 cups? You put down the knife to look at the recipe on your phone, and a text comes through. “OMG did you just see that Facebook post?” Well, shoot, now you're curious. It'll only take a second, so you pop over to Facebook to see what they're talking about...and the rest is history. You get sucked in and have spent 30 minutes watching cat videos and reading about Joe Schmoe's Saturday afternoon activities. A better method? Print the recipe, put the phone in the other room, and stay focused. It will go so much faster. Promise.

5. Motivate yourself.

Only you know what this looks like for you. It might be turning on some upbeat music, inviting a friend over to prep together, or setting up a meal exchange so you have an obligation to finish the prep for someone else. Whatever will keep you moving through the meal prepping, and see you from start to finish, implement it. You'll feel so much better when the middle of the week rolls around and all you have to do is grab something out of the fridge to nourish and refuel yourself. It all starts with the meal prep, and seeing it through to the end. You've got this – now get started!