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## Quick lunch prep ideas

Get organized for the week with these easy and healthy meal prep recipes! I'll give you tips to strategize your meal plans, and help you choose which recipes to batch cook or freeze. And don't forget my seasonal meal prep plans, which give you tasty ideas to enjoy year-round. I know the thought of planning out a week's worth of healthy meals can be daunting. But after years of perfecting my meal prep ideas and strategy, I can tell you this - it all starts with meal planning. So how does one do that? Well, the best way to approach this is to ask yourself a few questions... How many people do I need to prep for? Are you just one person? A family of four? Keep in mind how many servings you'll need to make of each recipe to get you through the week. Then jot that down. What's in season? Try to center your meals around in-season produce. Not only is it fresh and tasty, it'll challenge you to be creative and add variety throughout the year. Bonus - seasonal produce is usually cheaper and often on sale! What types of meals do I want to prep? There's two ways to look at this. You can create building blocks (separate ingredients) to get creative throughout the week or make fully cooked meals that you can easily reheat. Your schedule for the week might lead you one way or the other. There's no right or wrong choice, meal prep is meant to suit you and your schedule! From there, you can jot down your grocery list (after double checking what's already in your fridge, freezer, and pantry), and head to the market! Do You Have Meal Prep Containers? Now that your meal plan is out of the way, it's time to think about how you're going to organize all the food. I recommend keeping a selection of small, medium, and large containers, to accommodate everything from a large batch of zucchini lasagna to a small jar of lemon vinaigrette. You can read all about my favorite meal prep containers, but here's a quick glance at my top choices: Week Jars: These rounded glass jars come in a variety of shapes and sizes, are 100% airtight and freezer-safe.Le Parfait Jars: They're very similar to Week Jars and are great for canning or preserving ingredients.Glasslock Containers: These are your typical meal prep containers that's great for larger food items. But the best part is that they're durable in the fridge, freezer, and microwave.Stasher Bags: For sustainable reusable ziplock bags, opt for these silicone ones! Easy Breakfast Ideas to Have on Repeat For those early mornings when you need something quick and easy, grab n' go breakfasts will be your savior. Choose from a variety of sweet and savory breakfast ideas to keep you fueled throughout the week! Loaded Breakfast Casserole: This one's loaded with the most scrumptious flavors and is freezer friendly.Oatmeal: Pre-make a batch of oatmeal to enjoy through the week with different sweet and savory toppings.Sweet Potato Toast: This is the perfect way to start your day with extra veggies. Layer it with spinach and a poached egg for a quick and easy healthy eggs benedict!Breakfast Egg Muffins: These are the perfect grab n' go option. And feel free to get creative with filling flavors.Sweet Potato Breakfast Hash: Can't beat this veggie-heavy hash that reheats beautifully.Paleo Pancakes: Did you know you can freeze these pancakes? Just pop them in a toaster, drizzle maple syrup and you're done!Paleo Banana Nut Muffins: Sometimes, a warm muffin is just what we need in the morning. This one's perfectly sweet and freezes well. Meal Prep Snacks and Munchies Avoid buying processed snacks with these healthy snack ideas. These options are so easy to make, and will give you that extra boost of energy when you hit your mid-day slump. Durable Salads that Stay Good for Days The key to meal prep salads that last is avoiding lettuce and leafy greens. These salads are tossed with colorful vegetables, pantry staples, an array of proteins. But the best part? They last for about 3-4 days in the fridge. Best Chicken Meal Prep Ideas Chicken is a key ingredient for many meal prep lovers. But it's time to look past those boring, dry chicken breasts which unfortunately appear way too often in meal prep. Give your chicken a little extra oomph with marinades and seasonings for a restaurant-quality experience right at home. Big-Batch Cooking Recipes Have a big crowd to feed or planning for leftovers? Say no more. These big batch recipes are quick and easy, and packed with layers of flavor. Chicken Fajitas: A batch of these fajitas only takes 30 minutes to make!One Pan Chicken and Rice: A complete meal with chicken and rice. You'll be happy to have leftovers of this one.Baked Tuna Meatballs: These do double duty as a snack and complete meal when served with veggie sides. Plan ahead and make a double batch!Very Best Lentil Soup: When it comes to batch cooking, having a soup recipe on hand is a must. And this one's loaded with good-for-you ingredients.Chicken Stir-Fry: This stir-fry is perfect for enjoying throughout the week. And if you've got a bigger family to feed, just double the recipe!Pork And Fennel Meatballs: Just like the tuna meatballs, you'll want to make two batches for tasty leftovers. Freezer Meal Prep Favorites No meal prep list is complete without freezer-friendly meals. And trust me, having healthy meals prepped in your freezer is a gold mine for those extra busy days. Just reheat and enjoy! Best Ever Chili Recipe: Whip up this warming and comforting chili for those cold, wintery days.Stuffed Peppers: This family favorite is healthy, filling, and makes for great leftovers.Zucchini Lasagna: I love finding a batch of zucchini lasagna in my freezer, it's like finding a golden ticket!Taco Soup: Enjoy the best taco flavors conveniently in one tasty soup.Whole30 Chicken Broccoli Casserole: Casseroles are always welcome in the freezer, and this one is chicken broccoli heaven.Salmon Patties: A fun and delicious way to enjoy frozen salmon (or even tuna) Zucchini Fritters: Summer calls for these crisp, golden patties. So make sure to cook up a second batch to save in your freezer. Aside from making full meals, my seasonal meal prep ideas are always reader favorites. Why? Because prepping individual ingredients allows you to get creative with quick mix and match meals during the week. All you need to do is plan easy, adaptable, in-season ingredients that keep well in the fridge (think grains, sauces, veggies, and protein). Then make unique texture and flavor combinations everyday that will get you excited about meal time. Below you'll find each of my seasonal meal preps, along with a quick guideline to inspire your ingredient choices. Happy meal prepping! Winter Meal Prep: Meals that are hearty and filling with shredded pulled pork, lentils, sweet potato noodles, and vibrant winter vegetables.Spring Meal Prep: Fresh and light meals with shrimp spring rolls, shrimp salads, and a batch of chia pudding.Summer Meal Prep: It's all about incorporating fresh fruit, lettuce wraps, salads, zucchini bread, and sweet refreshing desserts into your meals.Fall Meal Prep: Cozy meals with ingredients like roasted sweet potatoes and kale to create a hash, a versatile hummus spread, and paleo apple pancakes for breakfast. Staple Bases Versatile Spreads And Sauces Fresh and Roasted Vegetables Protein Options If you make any of these meal prep recipes, let me know how it turned out! I'd love to hear what you think in the comments below. Easy and healthy meal prep recipes that will keep you fueled throughout week! One of my favorites is this Mediterranean chickpea salad. Enjoy! Add all of the ingredients to a mixing bowl. Pour the lemon vinaigrette into the salad and give it all a stir until combined. Transfer the salad to a large bowl and serve it right away or store in the fridge for meal prep. Calories: 300kcal, Carbohydrates: 34g, Protein: 12g, Fat: 14g, Saturated Fat: 4g, Cholesterol: 13mg, Sodium: 172mg, Potassium: 499mg, Fiber: 9g, Sugar: 8g, Vitamin A: 921IU, Vitamin C: 33mg, Calcium: 134mg, Iron: 4mg ©Downshiftology. Content and photographs are copyright protected. Sharing of this recipe is both encouraged and appreciated. Copying and/or pasting full recipes to any social media is strictly prohibited. Leave a comment below and share a photo on Instagram. Tag @downshiftology and hashtag it #downshiftology. Set yourself up with a healthy lunch for the entire week and make one of these healthy lunch meal prep recipes! If you're in the mood to meal prep, check out all of our best meal prep ideas round-up posts: meal prep breakfast recipes, meal prep dinner recipes, and even all of these delicious meal prep snack ideas! The day-old question -> How do I eat healthy all week when I have no time? We have found that most people struggle most with eating healthy at lunchtime. Breakfast and dinner tend to be a bit easier because you are at home and have a bit more control over when and what you eat. If you don't meal prep lunch, you are committing to no lunch (not ideal) or eating out for lunch (which can get expensive). Today we are talking all about our favorite healthy lunch ideas. There are many ways you can set yourself up with healthy lunches for work (or school) all week long with NO added stress. The number one thing we recommend is balance! We're all about balance and that's also true when prepping your lunches. Here's what a balanced lunch should look like: 1 serving of whole grains&6 oz. lean protein&1-2 servings vegetables One way to set yourself up for healthy eating during the day while you're at work or school is MEAL PREP. Set yourself up with all of the right kitchen gadgets, meal prep containers, and pantry essentials so you can be ready to meal prep at any time. Everything You Need We are all for having kitchen appliances that you actually use. We have a very detailed post all about the best kitchen essentials that will help you streamline meal prepping in your home, so check that post out for nitty-gritty details. If we had to pick out our four must-have meal prep tools, these would be them: Meal Prep Containers- Once you have made a meal that you would like to split up for meal prep, we suggest immediately separating it into meal prep containers. Having meals already split up and ready to go take one step out of getting ready for your day. And? Using a grab and go container just makes things easier! We love this glass one. Check out our top ratings for the Best Meal Prep Containers. Reusable silicone bags- Forget the plastic bags that you've grown up with. Get yourself a pack of reusable bags for sandwiches, dressings, oatmeal, and meal prep recipes! It is great for the environment and easy on the wallet! Instant Pot- Cut your cook time in half in the evenings or on your meal prep day during the week by making Instant Pot recipes! An Instant Pot is a new age pressure cooker that can take prepare meals that take hours in only minutes! Having an Instant Pot in the kitchen is a great meal prep tool for everyone! Slow Cooker- A slow cooker is another great meal prep tool that you can prepare a big meal for the week with little to no prep necessary! Slow cooker recipes are some of FFP's most popular meals! We love setting up our slow cooker in the morning and in the evening we have a delicious slow cooker recipe ready to eat or ready to meal prep! Keep the Pantry Stocked Most of our easy meal prep ideas are a combination of many pantry staples! It is so nice to have ingredients like quinoa, beans, and dried fruit ready in the pantry just in case we want to whip up a buddha bowl last minute. If you are going on a grocery run, here are some of our suggested pantry staples for meal prep! Make a Plan When people think about meal planning three meals a day for the whole week, it can sound exhausting! Guess what? You don't have to meal plan that many meals for the week! Everyone is different and it's ok to meal prep one or two meals for the week. It still makes a difference. Here are other tips we have for prepping healthy lunch recipes: Before anything, decide how many meal prep lunch recipes you want to prepare. Don't overwhelm yourself!Choose a meal or two that you are excited about. Prepare those meals and separate them out for lunch.Once you have tested a few meal prep meals, choose a few meals that were easy for you to make and tasted good. Then, add them to your meal prep roster so you have meals that you can whip up whenever you need them! You got questions, we got answers! Here are some of the most commonly asked questions when it comes to meal prep lunch recipes! How long do meal prep meals last in the refrigerator? How long a meal prep meal can last in the refrigerator depends on a couple of things. Most meal prep meals can last between 5-7 days in the refrigerator if they are stored in an airtight meal prep container. Another way you can make meal prep meals last longer is if you wait to add dressings, sauces, or drizzles until right before you serve them. This will keep greens and other ingredients from getting soggy! Can you freeze meal prep meals? You can freeze many meals in meal prep containers if you would like. We suggest avoiding freezing noodles and cheese. If you are looking for meals you can prepare and freeze, check out our post on 6 Crockpot Freezer Meals! They are great for meal prep! We also love freezing soup, so if you are looking for great soups to meal prep and freeze, check out our post on How to Freeze Soup. Do you eat meal prep meals hot or cold? To each their own! You can eat your meal prep meals hot or cold! It just depends. We tend to warm up most of our meal prep recipes. The only recipes we tend to eat cold are our chicken salad, quinoa salad, or green salad recipes Can meal prep last a week? Yes, meal prep can last a whole week! Be sure to store all of your meal prep meals in airtight containers. It also helps to keep dressings and sauces separate from other ingredients to prevent ingredients from going soggy. Is meal prepping good for weight loss? Meal prepping can be a benefit for many reasons. Every meal is all about balance and moderation. Meal prepping can help you plan healthy meals and snacks that are nutritious and that keep you on track to stay balanced throughout the week. Can you meal prep rice? Yes, you can meal prep rice! When you are planning on meal prepping rice, undercook the rice a bit so there is still a bite to it. You will be reheating the rice eventually and don't want it to be mushy. Our Best Healthy Lunch Ideas Instant Pot Stuffed Spaghetti Squash Make this Instant Pot Stuffed Spaghetti Squash next time you're looking for a vegetarian meal prep idea that you can enjoy all week long! It's ready in 30-minutes! V, GF General Tso's Cauliflower This General Tso's Cauliflower is a twist on classic takeout but made vegetarian with cauliflower instead of chicken! Vegetarian Rotisserie Chicken Cobb Salad Your lunch for the week is ready in less than 30 minutes with this protein-packed Rotisserie Chicken Cobb Salad! Gluten-Free Moroccan Quinoa Salad This Moroccan quinoa salad with crispy chickpeas is protein-packed and full of veggies! Make it today for a healthy meal prep lunch idea for the week! Vegetarian & Gluten Free Caprese Chicken Pasta Healthy pasta lovers, this one's for you! A Caprese Chicken Pasta that packs 51g of protein per serving and all those delicious caprese flavors you love. Plus, it's perfect for meal prep! Mediterranean Salmon Meal Prep Simple Mediterranean Salmon Meal Prep made with an amazing arugula mint pesto, a chunky Greek salad, and a side of couscous! Gluten Free & Keto More Lunch Meal Prep Ideas Vegetarian/Vegan Creamy Greek Pasta Salad with Cashew Vegan Pesto V, GLightened Up Broccoli Cheddar Twice Baked Potatoes GFGreen Goddess Zucchini Pasta GF, DFInstant Pot Potato Salad GFVegan Potato Salad V, GFHealthy Baked Potato Salad GFShaved Brussels Sprout Salad GFSuperfood Detox Salad GF, VThai Chili Corn Salad GF, VRoasted Brussel Sprout Salad with Quinoa GF, VBlack Bean Corn Salad GF, VVegan Asian Broccoli Salad GF, VGolden Roasted Cauliflower and Quinoa Salad GF, VQuinoa Tabouli Recipe GF, VChunky Southwestern Quinoa Salad GF, VFresh Caprese Quinoa Salad GFBest Quinoa Salad RecipesMassaged Kale and Fennel Salad with Lemon Vinaigrette GF, VGrilled Kale and Watermelon Salad GF, VAsian Salad GF, VBest Kale Salad RecipesStrawberry Spinach Salad GF, VVegetarian Meal Prep- Roasted Brussels Sprout Polenta Bowls V Meat/Fish

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