



Isabel De Los Rios

# 7 Days is All You Need

---

Almost every day, my children teach me something valuable... something that I can apply to other areas of my life... something that I can pass on to my Beyond Diet family. Read below as I share how you can implement the same strategy I used with my son's morning routine to reach your own weight loss goals.

Morning routines can be a challenge for anyone. But recently, my husband and I were really being challenged by our oldest son, Christian, who was just being "resistant" to getting dressed and out the door to school on time.

Christian would be perfectly happy all morning long, and very much looking forward to going to school, but once we told him it was time to get dressed he would melt down.

I didn't quite understand it at first, but then again, there are a lot of things about my kids I don't understand. Instead of trying to fight it, my husband and I decided to change the morning routine a bit (just a few tweaks) and see if that changed Christian's response.

Here's what we agreed to...

1. We'll start this new established routine and we will stick to it for a solid 7 days. This would give Christian time to adjust and would give us time to assess whether it worked.
2. Even if the plan did not work for the first few days, we would trust it and commit to the 7 days.
3. We would come together after the 7 days and assess the results. Did it work? Are there adjustments needed? Where did we see improvement? Where were there successes, even if they were small?

I'm happy to report that we finally found a routine that has made everyone happy. We didn't get it perfect on the first try. It took us one more change before we really got it right, but it was worth the time we put in to think it through and keep everyone, especially our children, happy every morning.

You see, every child is so individual, and the strategies we use for one can't always be the same we use for the next.

This is exactly how your nutrition and weight loss plan should be viewed. There is a plan that will work for you that may not be the same plan that would work for your husband, wife, sibling, or friend. Your plan should be treated as YOURS and should be tweaked and adjusted until it is the perfect plan for YOU.

Here is what your weight loss plan would look like using the above example...

1. Find a routine that feels good for you and commit to sticking with it for 7 days. This give your body time to adjust, and it gives you time to determine what is working and what is not working. To make it very simple on you, you can pick from any of the established successful meal plans in Beyond Diet.
2. Even if your plan is not producing incredible results after the first few days, trust it and commit to seeing the entire 7 days through. That's the only way you will be able to truly see what will be the most successful plan for you.
3. After the initial 7 days, ask yourself the following questions: How do I feel? How did this plan fit into my life? Are there small tweaks that will make this more effective? What were my successes this week? Then create your tweaks and modifications based on the answers.

I find the above action steps to be extremely effective for people who have struggled with losing weight in the past. Sometimes it seems so daunting to imagine going on a new eating plan, or changing old habits that you've had for a long time, but what if you took it 7 days at a time?

Would that make it feel easier? Would that make it seem doable?

I can personally say that taking new goals in 7-day increments has helped me get to where I am today. Even with the above example about my son's schedule, knowing that I would be reconvening with my husband in a few days to assess the situation made it feel more "doable."

# 6 Tips to Maximize Your Meal Plans

---

“Time saving” has really become my middle name. I wouldn’t trade the craziness of working full-time and caring for my 2 sons for anything in the world, but it takes some serious strategic planning to get it all done (fellow parents... I know you know what I’m talking about here).

Even if you’re not a parent, everyone is busy and pretty pressed for time each day - school, work, house duties, the list goes on and on - and unless you implement some useful time saving strategies to ensure you get in your healthy meals and your exercise, the day has a way of getting away from you.

Today I’m going to share some of my favorite time saving tips to make sure I have healthy food available most of the time. I say “most” of the time because nothing is ever perfect, right?

## 1. Leftovers, leftovers, leftovers.

I know that’s not exactly an earth shattering revelation, but many times people are not maximizing the time that they are cooking by making enough food to have again for breakfast, lunch, and/or dinner the next day. Yes, I said breakfast, and I have been known to have leftover chicken legs and spinach at 6 am. I would say that 9 times out of 10 during the week, my lunch is what I ate for dinner the night before, but I will eat it cold over a salad - baked chicken, grilled beef, broiled salmon - all of these are absolutely delicious over a yummy salad along with my [“Famous Salad Dressing.”](#)

## 2. Freeze the leftovers.

I did this just last night. I made [Turkey and Veggie Meatballs](#) for my son for dinner, but I made enough not only for his dinner, but for lunch the next day... and a whole batch to put in the freezer. He and I both absolutely love these meatballs and knowing that I have them already prepared in the freezer has saved me many times in a pinch.

If I think ahead, I’ll pull them out of the freezer the night before and put them into the fridge to defrost for the next day. If not, they defrost really well in a pan with coconut oil on very low heat (takes about 15 minutes).

### 3. The crockpot is my best friend.

Whoever invented this wonderful piece of equipment deserves a thank you card from every busy person in the world. I am convinced you can throw an old shoe in there and it will somehow make the whole house smell wonderful and turn out to be a perfect dinner. Okay, okay, I'm exaggerating, but I can throw just about any meat or poultry in the slow cooker along with some veggies, chicken stock, and a few spices, and dinner is ready when I get home from work. How easy is that? Many nights I will get all my slow cooker food items ready in the evening so I can just throw them all in the morning and just turn the thing on.

### 4. Hard-boiled eggs are also my best friends.

Yes, I should probably make friends outside of my kitchen, but hard-boiled eggs are another great lifesaver... I mean dinner-saver. In a pinch, I love to make an egg + avocado + greens salad, where I chop 2 hard-boiled eggs and half an avocado and eat them over a salad of romaine lettuce and tomatoes. I top it off with my "[Famous Salad Dressing](#)" and dinner is served... super easy and very filling.

### 5. Prepare your own awesome trail mix at the beginning of each week.

On Saturday or Sunday I dump approximately even amounts of the following into a gallon size Ziploc storage bag: almonds, Brazil nuts, pecans, walnuts, pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds, dried cranberries (no sugar added), cacao nibs (not as much as all the other stuff), and shredded coconut. I sprinkle in some sea salt and voila... a delicious and healthy trail mix. Next I put approximately 2 ounces of the trail mix in Ziploc snack bags to take with me "on the go." I usually count this as 1 protein and 1 carb (even though it's probably not exact). My sons have quickly figured out that this delicious trail mix is always in my purse and will go digging for it whenever they're hungry.

## **6. Find recipes that say, “Prep Time: 10-15 minutes” (or less).**

The prep time of a recipe is usually the FIRST thing I check before deciding whether or not to even consider a recipe during the week (I save the longer ones for the weekend). The next thing I check is the ingredients list and see whether or not it will require any healthy substitutions or modifications.

I hope you find these 6 tips to be real time (and sanity) savers when it comes to planning your healthy meals each week. The more you “automate,” the more smoothly things go!

# Make the Most of Your Time in the Kitchen

---

When I first started eating healthy, I felt like all I ever did was cook and prepare meals.

Cutting, chopping, packing, freezing... wow, it felt like it was endless, and it took up so much time. Some days it was enough to make me say, "Forget this whole healthy eating thing. I'm just going to grab the first quick thing I can get my hands on!"

But then I quickly remembered that it was that exact way of thinking that led to my 30-pound weight gain to begin with. Something definitely needed to change.

So I asked myself a question that often applies to other areas of my life...

*How can I make this entire process much simpler?*

Luckily for me (and now you), I've found many solutions that have helped make cooking and meal prep a simple part of my life.

If eating the Beyond Diet way was complicated, I wouldn't have stuck with it for this long, especially since my life is so jam packed today - 2 kids, homeschooling, a full-time business - it's a lot to take on each day, so a solid simple strategy is a MUST when it comes to cooking.

If you're having a hard time keeping up with the demands of daily life and the preparation needed to eat your healthy food, the strategy below may be perfect for you.

It's the same step-by-step process I use every single week in my own home, and it works beautifully.

## Step 1 - Know your meals for the week

Back in the day, I used to get stuck right here (yep... on step 1). I would look at my recipe books and black journal and think, "Now what?"

Since I don't want you blankly staring like I was, I created a full meal plan to start you off on Beyond Diet. You don't need to make any decisions about which meals are best for you, which are easy-to-make, and (the most important) which ones actually taste good.

Once you've completed the meal plans and are ready to start planning out your meals on your own, you can do what I do: head over to the Recipes section to choose my meals for the week. If I have leftover meats, fruits, or veggies on hand, I choose recipes that utilize these ingredients to cut down on the grocery bill. Otherwise, I just choose whatever looks good!

## Step 2 - Create your "Cook & Freeze" list.

Your "Cook & Freeze" list is all of the meals or foods that you can cook ahead of time, freeze, and enjoy later. This is especially useful for batch cooking where you make more than enough portions to keep in the freezer for later. This can literally cut your time in the kitchen in half!

Chili, meatloaf, burgers, meatballs, soup... all of these can be made ahead of time and frozen for super simple meals throughout the week. Just defrost in the refrigerator during the day, heat before meal time, and enjoy!

## Step 3 - Create your "Cook & Fridge" list.

This is similar to the process in step 2, but now you're looking for items that you can cook ahead of time and keep in the fridge for up to 3 days. (Keep in mind - this step is usually done twice each week.)

Here's how I do it: I make my "Cook & Fridge" foods on Sunday and Tuesday. On Sunday, I plan what foods will be needed on Monday and Tuesday. On Tuesday, I plan for what will be needed on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. (Saturdays are usually a freezer meal or a dinner out with my husband.)

## Step 4 - Create a “Washed & Chopped” list.

Noticing a pattern here?

Your “Washed & Chopped” list is all of the food that you can keep ready-made to make following a recipe, or enjoying a quick snack, a breeze. Like the “Cook & Freeze” list, this will be done twice a week - also on Sunday and Tuesday. This way all of your ingredients are fresh, but they're easy to use throughout the week!

## Step 5 - Shopping.

With the lists you've made in the previous steps, you've already created your shopping list! And if you're following a Beyond Diet meal plan, I've done the work for you - find your shopping list in My Library.

While I do a lot of my shopping online (thanks to Amazon, Thrive Market, and VitaCost), I also visit farmer's markets and my local grocery store for the items I can't find online. And I can never resist a trip to Whole Foods... it's become one of my happy places!

## Step 6 - Schedule your prep days.

As I said above, my prep days are Sunday and Tuesday. Sunday's prep takes a bit more time because that's when I prepare the foods on my “Cook & Freeze” list. I make enough to freeze 4-6 servings so the food is usually frozen for a whole month, making it even easier to prep food later in the month.

Not sure exactly how to have a “prep day”? This article can help you make the most of that time:

[Shopping Day, Chopping Day.](#)

## Step 7 - Recruit your cooking “buddy.”

Before you start dragging unwilling friends and family members into the kitchen, keep in mind that your “buddy” can be anyone or *anything* you choose. *Thing*? Yes! If you're a fan of podcasts and audio books like I am, you may want to spend this time listening to your favorites.

Let your family know that this will be your sacred time and they need to limit interruptions. If you have small children, this may not be an option... yet. Try “trading” the babysitting responsibilities with a fellow mom and return the favor on her prep days.

My favorite buddy is my fellow Beyond Diet follower... my mom!

She comes over after church on Sunday, ready to tackle our meals for the week. The greatest part about this is that, in addition to preparing our healthy meals for the week, my mom and I get a couple hours of quality time together every week. It doesn't get any better than that!

So there you have it... in just a few steps, you too can take back control of the meals you eat and serve to your family, every single week. No more stopping at the fast food line or scrambling to find dinner inspiration with a rumbly tummy.