



## Meal Prep: Tricks and Tips for Healthy Habits

*A palette of colors spills across the countertop: bright orange, verdant green, fire-engine red. This is now a weekly occurrence at Marie's house. Each Sunday, she or her husband take 20-30 minutes to chop veggies for the week. When they're really organized, the prep is done with specific recipes in mind. When there hasn't been enough time to plan out meals, there are the standards: broccoli, cauliflower, carrots, peppers, and celery. The prepared vegetables have been a game-changer in their diet—if they need a snack, they reach for some carrots instead of crackers and cheese or something sweet. It has also been a great way to get more veggies into their kid—as soon as she is home from school there are healthy snacks to munch on.*

It can be hard to maintain a healthy diet, and for many people, it has become more challenging during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our energy is diminished and this makes it more difficult to plan. To eat well on an ongoing basis, it is necessary to develop new habits, which can be daunting, especially when you're already tired. That said, new practices don't have to happen all at the same time. And, as you establish a new food routine, you can also help loved ones who need additional support—it is easy to prep a little extra so that there is enough to deliver to them to ensure they can cook healthy meals too.

Gradually, you may want to build up a meal preparation practice that makes eating healthy every day easy. The keys to this are:

- A variety of quick and easy go-to recipes
- A block of time once a week to prep ingredients
- A recipe-oriented grocery list

## Meal Preparation Resources

There are now many companies that provide services to support meal prep and healthy eating. These range from deliveries of ready-to-go ingredients to recipes and grocery lists. These can be helpful, but it is also feasible to develop your own habits so that meal prep becomes part of your weekly routine.

Some nutritionists are shifting the focus from the four food groups to emphasize the importance of healthy habits that include eating at home more often. An excellent resource is [The Nutrition Source](#), which was established as part of Harvard University's Public School of Health. The goal is to provide accurate information that is not influenced by the food industry or marketing. It provides tips and resources to facilitate making changes. Experts contribute and review the information on a regular basis.

Part of The Nutrition Source is dedicated to [meal prep](#). They provide more than the how-to and explain the benefits that go beyond health—saving money and time and reducing stress. The guide also outlines clear steps to follow to build towards a consistent meal prep practice. It even provides several healthy recipes that might be the perfect start to your selection of go-to meals.

## Meal Planning for your Loved Ones

A healthy nutritious diet is imperative for seniors to maintain their health and independence. However, it can take a lot of energy to stand in the kitchen to prepare ingredients. There is a range of

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however, it can take a lot of energy to stand in the kitchen to prepare ingredients. There is a range of interventions that can make this easier—from rearranging the space for ease of use (ensuring there is a stool that can be used when cutting up ingredients, placing all appliances on easy to reach shelves) to hiring meal prep services or a home care provider who can shop and cook. You can learn more about how to help your loved one maintain a healthy diet in one of our new [e-books](#).

*It's Tuesday night at Marie's house. Everyone's hungry and it would have been easy to resort to take-out on the way home or a frozen pizza. Instead, the veggies are chopped, the recipe is already on the counter, and within 30 minutes, the family is sitting down to a stir fry—there might even be leftovers for lunch tomorrow.*

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