



Quick and Healthy Meals

In today's busy world you may not have a lot of time to make meals each day. If this is the case for you, don't worry! There are a number of strategies you can use to make quick meals that are healthy too.

Here are 5 simple tips for making healthy meals quickly:

1. Plan meals ahead. Planning meals is simple and makes preparing meals faster and easier because you know what you are going to make ahead of time. Try planning meals one week ahead—you could plan all of your meals including snacks or just dinners. Try to make half of each meal vegetables and fruits. When planning meals, be sure to make a grocery list of what you'll need for the week so you can get it all in one shopping trip. This will save a lot of time each week!

2. Keep healthy staples in your fridge, freezer, and pantry.

Having healthy staples on hand like carrots, broccoli, frozen fruit and vegetables, eggs, rice, and canned beans ensures that you have what you need to prepare meals. This also saves time because it allows you to grocery shop less frequently.



3. Cook once, eat again, and again. Certain foods like brown rice, home-cooked beans, and some meats take longer than 30 minutes to prepare. So, when you cook these foods, make extra and store them in the fridge or freezer until you are ready to use them in your next meal. This saves a lot of time because they are already cooked and ready to incorporate into your meal. Just remember to include these foods in your meal plan or freeze them if you need to store them for longer than 3 to 5 days.

4. Prepare ingredients ahead. Once you make your meal plan, you know what you will need to prepare during the week. Try cutting fresh vegetables and fruits for all of your meals at one time so they are ready to use when you need them for meals or snacks—this will save a lot of time later.

5. Use time-saving cooking methods and one-dish meals. Using a slow cooker is a great way to prepare quick meals because you can turn it on in the morning, and your meal will be ready for dinner in the evening. Slow cookers work great for soups, chili, meat dishes, and whole grains dishes. Also, vegetables, grains, and lean proteins like beans or lean meats can often be combined in a single dish like vegetable tacos, hearty soups, or grain salads to cut down on food preparation, cooking time, and dishes!

4 quick and healthy ideas for breakfast, lunch, and dinner:

Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
Oatmeal: Cook old-fashioned rolled oats, then top with raw nuts, fresh or dried fruit, and a bit of honey or maple syrup.	Sandwich: On whole grain bread, add lean protein like deli turkey, lettuce, and vegetables.	Brown rice bowl: Top cooked brown rice with sautéed vegetables, fresh vegetables, protein of choice, and salsa.
Fruit and yogurt parfait: In a cup, layer plain or Greek yogurt, fruit, and granola.	Pasta salad: Toss pasta with fresh veggies, beans or cooked meat, and dressing.	Pasta bowl: Cook pasta, toss with sauce, then add protein of choice, and steamed vegetables.
Fruit smoothie: Blend fresh or frozen fruit, plain yogurt, ice, and water (if needed) in a blender until smooth.	Whole grain salad: Toss cooked whole grains like quinoa, beans, and chopped fresh veggies with dressing.	Dinner salad: Toss salad greens, cooked whole grains, cooked chicken or beans, and fresh vegetables with dressing.
Vegetable scramble: Sauté chopped vegetables with eggs, tofu, or beans. Serve with whole grain toast if desired.	Wrap: Fill a whole grain wrap with protein of choice, lettuce, fresh vegetables, and add hummus or dressing.	Vegetable tortillas: Sauté vegetables, warm beans or cook meat, add toppings like salsa, cheese, lettuce, then fill tortillas.



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