Meal Planning 101: How to Plan a Week’s Worth of Meals in One Day

If you are short on time and still want to make nutritious food for your family, you should start meal planning. This involves getting ingredients and meals ready to cook for each day, minimizing how much needs to be done when it’s time to prepare dinner. Here are some things to know about meal planning and what is involved.

**Marinate Your Meat Beforehand**

One great way to start planning and prepping your meals for the next week is to by your meat in bulk, then marinate it ahead of time. Marinating does take quite a bit of time, so it helps if you can start cooking right after returning home from work or after picking up your kids from school. Choose different types of marinades for different meats, based on what meals you want to use them for. Some meats that work great as marinating ahead of time include flank steak, pork chops, lamb chops, ribs, and chicken breasts.

**Be Detailed With Your Meal Plan**

When you are planning your meals for the week, try to be as detailed as possible. Get out a pen and paper and start by writing down what you already have on hand as a way to start your meals. Include any grains, seasonings, condiments, meat, veggies, and other items that you have. This will help to put meals together and also reduce how much you need to buy. With those ingredients, make a list of meals for breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks, and desserts. Use that list to write down ingredients you need for each meal, trying to remember to leave room for leftovers and choose items that can be used for multiple meals.

**Prep Components of Your Meals**

Instead of cooking entire meals, just take some time on your day off each week to prep components of your meals. This makes it a lot easier when cooking time comes each day. For example, when you are planning your meals, you can also consider some items that would b easy to prep together. For example, plan to have a lot of the same veggies in a single week, that can all be baked together. Roasting veggies together and putting them in the same Tupperware container is a lot easier than trying to have a different veggie every night of the week.

**Involve Your Kids**

If you are stuck on ideas, don’t be afraid to ask your kids for help! They might have some suggestions for their own lunches that are not only healthy, but help you put a varied list together for the following weeks’ meals.