

## DINNER? AGAIN? SEEMS EXCESSIVE...

BY CASEE  
YARBOROUGH,  
LAT, ATC



Let's keep **building** healthy habits **together!** Not only healthy habits for our bodies, but also healthy habits for the earth. One healthy habit to nail down is meal planning. Meal planning and meal prepping can look different person to person.



### WHY MEAL PLAN AND MEAL PREP

To meal plan, set aside a dedicated few minutes to think about what to eat for a certain amount of time in the future - usually the next week. Meal planning goes hand-in-hand with meal prepping. Once you plan the meals in advance, you'll benefit from preparing them in advance too. You'll also benefit from your plan if it consists of food you create from groceries rather than dining out (but rewarding yourself with a dinner out at a restaurant if you know it will be a busy day or a special occasion is a nice break too). As an industrial athlete, you need both quantity and quality of food to sustain your active work day, so meal planning can ensure you are [fueling your body properly](#).

### BENEFITS

Let's give you some reasons to want to at least try out meal planning. Let's start with some *health benefits*:

#### Meal planning minimizes unhealthy food choices:

- Avoid cravings and impulsive decisions about food.
- Consume less sugars, processed foods, and greasy foods.
- Reduce overeating with more realistic portion sizes.

#### Meal planning reduces financial stress:

- Budget for food costs ahead of time.
- Grocery-based meals can be cheaper than restaurant-based meals.

What about *environmental benefits*? We have those too!

#### Reduces gas and energy usage:

- Condense trips by buying groceries once for the week.
- Spend less on gas to pick up food from restaurants or have it delivered.
- Cooking at home uses less energy than restaurants.

#### Avoid food waste:

- Prepare realistic portion sizes, unlike restaurants, and consume leftovers during other meal times.
- Only buy necessary groceries, so food doesn't go unused and thrown away.

#### Prevent unnecessary garbage:

- Store and transport food in reusable containers instead of single-use containers and utensils used by restaurants.

### BLUEPRINT FOR MEAL PLANNING

If this is your first time with this concept, **start small**. At the beginning of your weekend, think of one meal you can cook. Based on what works for your schedule, this meal could be breakfast, lunch, or dinner. If you haven't cooked this meal before, find an easy recipe as a guide.



*Cook a few extra servings and save them as leftovers to eat during other meal slots. You've planned multiple meals for the effort of one!*

Take inventory in your fridge and pantry. Make a list of ingredients to pick up from the store based on your current supply. Make one trip to the store, picking up ingredients you need for your meal plan along with any other weekly needs.

#### Goals:

- avoid buying extra groceries that will go to waste,
- use food you already have in your house, and
- avoid making multiple trips to the grocery store.

As you get comfortable with meal planning and prepping a couple of meals, slowly take on more. Work up to planning all of your lunch and dinner meals or every meal for the whole week. If getting started with meal planning and meal prepping feels intimidating, [there are apps to help!](#)



**Casee Yarborough, LAT, ATC** || Casee is a Certified Athletic Trainer with a degree from Palm Beach Atlantic University. A native Floridian, she worked as an athletic trainer at a high school for two years before switching to the industrial setting. Outside of work she enjoys fitness, sports, and traveling.

**Work Right NW** is changing the way that companies view workplace hazards. Our focus is on educating the workforce to prevent injury. We provide access to Injury Prevention Specialists in the workplace to address the early signs of discomfort. We are changing the industry one company at a time by helping one person at a time.