



# NUTRITION SUCCESS FOR YOU IN 2024!

by Rachel Payne

**F**or the most part, nutrition is the hardest part of any fitness goals whether you are just trying to lose weight or prepping for a bodybuilding show. For the do-it-yourselfer, armed with the right tools, you'll be ready to go for the goals you've set. As with any plan, you need to break it down into small tasks. In this case, we are assuming you've already determined what nutrition plan you are going to follow whether you are doing your own research or have a nutrition coach.

Decide which days of the week you plan on prepping your meals. Some people prep meals once a week, others prefer twice a week and depends primarily on your time and the foods you chose to prepare. Some foods obviously will only stay fresh for 2-3 days while other foods can last a little longer in the fridge. Or you may prefer to cook some things in larger batches and store them in the freezer.

Get the containers you plan to use to prepare those meals in. Glass, Tupperware, BPA Free containers, baggies, this is a personal preference and should be determined based on what works for you. Create your menu for the week. I suggest you make a complete list of all your meals; I like to make a chart. This eliminates the decision-making process when you're trying to get ready for work or get the kids out the door in the morning. You can make it quick and easy by planning ahead so you can even grab and go your first meal of the day.

The most important thing you can do for yourself is start your day off right by seeing that first meal as the first successful thing for the day on your journey to reaching your fitness goals. There are some things I may eat the same all week long like breakfast for example. I might have an egg white cup with fruit and almonds. Next week I can change it to oatmeal with fruit and seeds or Ezekiel bread with avocado slices and apple or I can choose to mix it up. A lot of it will depend on how much time I have available.





Continue charting your menu for the week. Once that's done, you can create your grocery list for the week. Using your menu, list all the ingredients you will need to purchase to make these meals. By doing this prior to going to the store, you will make your shopping trip more efficient, reduce the temptation to buy foods that are not conducive to your goals, and you can make sure you don't forget anything. One note of importance; once you create your chart, you need to round it out with the additional foods you'll need to make for other family members such as lunch box items for kids, or extra side dishes for you husband or wife. Now you're ready to shop.

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When you start prepping your meals, get as much done ahead of time as you can. Washing fruits and veggies, cutting up fruits, veggies and meats can save you a lot of time. Start cooking your meals, portion them out into your containers and stack in the fridge. You're ready to go. Make sure you have a cooler bag of some sort to carry your food with you for the day. Having your food with you all day is the easiest way to insure you stick to your plan!

If you plan to go through this process each week making it a regular part of your routine, you'll find the process gets easier. One of the biggest challenges people have is that they will say they get bored eating the same foods all the time. We are by nature creatures of habit and generally rotate through a handful of meals. As you discover which foods you can make in bulk and which recipes work best for you and your family, look for ways to add flavor with fresh herbs and seasonings, different textures for example, chicken can be grilled, baked, broiled, poached, roasted, sliced, diced, and pulled. You can eat it grilled the first night, do stir fry with Asian zucchini noodles the next night, make a healthy curry chicken salad with nonfat Greek yogurt, or add to quinoa salad or make a chicken soup.



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Having a plan is the first step, executing the plan is the hardest step, then accessing and making adjustments along the way will help you get the results you desire. It may take some getting used to at first and no one expects you to be perfect on day one. If you stick with it, by the end of the first month you'll be a meal prep pro! One last piece of advice, find ways to have fun while you're doing it, making meal prep time shared with your partner or involving your kids in the process to make it a family affair, experiment with new herbs and seasonings, or create your own rubs for meats. You can aim for success armed with these nutrition tips and get off to a great head start going into the new year!

