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Week 1 Meal Prep Guide 30-Day No Excuses Challenge

Phoenix Wellness

30-Day No Excuses Challenge

Meal Prep Guide – Week 1

Hi! And welcome to the 30-Day No Excuses Challenge. I'm so excited that you've decided to drop your excuses and take on this fitness and nutrition challenge. It's only 30 days. And when it's over, hopefully you'll find that you'll continue along with the healthy habits you've created during the month. So, let's get to it! First, I'll explain how the Meal Prep Guides are set up, and then we'll get to the delicious recipes.

For each Meal Prep Guide throughout the next four weeks, I'll highlight a healthy breakfast, two main meals, two side dishes, and a snack. The goal here is to start making healthier choices, little by little, without feeling overwhelmed. When you're overwhelmed, you may feel like the path to getting healthier is just too daunting, and you're more likely to fall back into old, bad habits. It's not always easy, but once you see and feel the benefits of consistently nourishing your body with healthy foods, it'll be easier to continue.

Making healthier choices doesn't require throwing out all of the junk in your cupboards immediately (although you're certainly welcome to!). All it requires is making small changes. And before you know it, those small changes compounded on each other will add up to huge gains and health benefits. You'll have more energy, clearer skin, sleep better, and you'll most likely lose some weight.

One way to make sure you're ready for the hectic week that usually lies ahead is to prepare some meals ahead of time. It's easy enough to do, but it will require you to carve out an hour or two from your busy schedule. I can promise you that the benefits are worth it, though! Once you get into the habit of food prepping, you'll be lost if you skip a week. I know from personal experience that when I have healthy food ready to go, I eat better. When I haven't prepared for the week, I reach for the first thing that will only take a few minutes to heat up (usually a processed something that is high in fat and calories because I'm so hungry and just want to eat NOW), and I typically overeat. Maybe you can relate...

Remember, this challenge is about ***not making any excuses***. When we make the time to exercise and eat well, we feel better. When we feel better, we're in a better mood, more positive, happier, and we're more patient with those around us. Plus, when we make goals and ***don't make excuses*** for letting them slip, we actually see results. And THAT is the ultimate motivator. So take this opportunity to create some new, healthy habits and to ***drop any excuses*** you once relied on as a reason why you're not getting the results you want. After all, **when you drop your excuses, you'll find results!**

How to use this Meal Prep Guide:

- Choose one or two recipes (or all of them) that you'd like to try out – even having one thing prepped will save you time, and you'll have at least one healthy thing on hand for when you get hungry!
- Make sure you have all the ingredients.
- PLAN a time that you will prep the meals. Write it in your calendar if you need to!
- Portion the foods in individual containers so that they're ready to grab and go. Even portioning snacks ahead of time helps you keep track of how much you're eating, as well as makes it easy to grab them when you're in a rush.

- If you don't like a particular ingredient, swap it out for something else. The recipes I use are very versatile so that you can make them to your liking. **Ask if you need help with any substitutions!** (Really, I'm not just saying that. I'd love to help.)
- Each week, decide which recipes you'll make before you go shopping. It saves on time and money when you know exactly what you need to get and have a plan of attack for the grocery store. You also won't waste money on perishable items that you probably won't use.
- If you have extra greens, freeze them! You won't waste them, and they'll be ready for the blender.

And now, what you've all been waiting for...the recipes!

Breakfast

The first time I tried this chicken hash recipe, it was all over for me. I kept saying, “Mmmmmmmmmmm!” It was that good. And it’s so versatile. Add more or less of what you want or throw in some other things, too. (Different nuts, potatoes, some carrots or onion, or maybe even some egg. The list goes on and on...) Your creativity is your only limit...along with what the others in your family like to eat.

Chicken Hash (Adapted from “The Whole30” by Melissa and Dallas Hartwig)

Ingredients:

- 2 tbsp. cooking fat (such as olive oil)
- 1lb. boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut into bite-sized pieces
- ½ tsp. salt
- ½ tsp. black pepper
- ½ c. chopped walnuts
- 1 sweet potato, peeled and grated (You can do this with a food processor.)
- 1 Granny Smith apple, cored, peeled and diced
- ½ tsp. red pepper flakes
- 2 handfuls of baby spinach



Directions:

1. In a large skillet, heat the cooking fat over medium-high heat, swirling to coat the bottom of the pan. When the fat is hot, add the chicken, being sure not to crowd the pieces. Season the chicken with salt and pepper. Cook until browned (about 2-3 minutes).
2. Turn the chicken so that it browns on the other sides and add the walnuts to toast them (2-3 minutes), shaking occasionally.
3. Add the sweet potato, apples and red pepper flakes, and cook, stirring frequently until the chicken is fully cooked (3-4 minutes).
4. Add the spinach and cook for 30 seconds, gently stirring to wilt the leaves.
5. Serve immediately.

*It’s easy enough to double this recipe, or adjust it to your liking. For example, you can keep all quantities the same and add another sweet potato. Like more greens? Add ‘em in! Maybe you have 1.5 lbs of chicken? That’s good too! Want more spice? Sprinkle in some more red pepper flakes!

The point of this? Use what you have, and don’t be afraid to switch things up.

**Oh, by the way, the leftovers are great cold. If you want, add on a scrambled or fried egg. Why not?

Main Meal #1

This is a great recipe that will suit the entire family! It's easy to prepare, and you can either make homemade pesto or you can get a store-bought brand for easiness. (Although it doesn't take too long to make the pesto, so you may want to try it.)

Chicken with Pesto and Tomato (Taken from the "Paleo Running Momma" blog)

Ingredients:

For the Pesto:

- 1 c. raw shelled walnuts
- 3 c. fresh basil leaves
- 2 c. fresh baby spinach
- 4 cloves garlic
- 2/3 c. light flavored olive oil (This has a milder flavor than extra virgin olive oil)
- ¾ c. salt

For the Chicken:

- 1.5 lbs. boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 4 slices tomato
- Pinch of Italian seasoning



Instructions:

For the pesto: (Or to make things easier, you can use store-bought pesto.)

1. Place all ingredients in a blender or food processor and blend/process on high speed until a paste forms, stopping to scrape the sides once or twice for blending. You can store this in the fridge for up to a week.

For the chicken:

1. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees.
2. Place the chicken breasts in a greased baking dish or iron skillet and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Then spread a generous amount of pesto on the chicken.
3. Top each piece of chicken with tomato and sprinkle with Italian seasoning.
4. Bake for 20-25 minutes until just cooked through. Slice chicken as desired and serve.

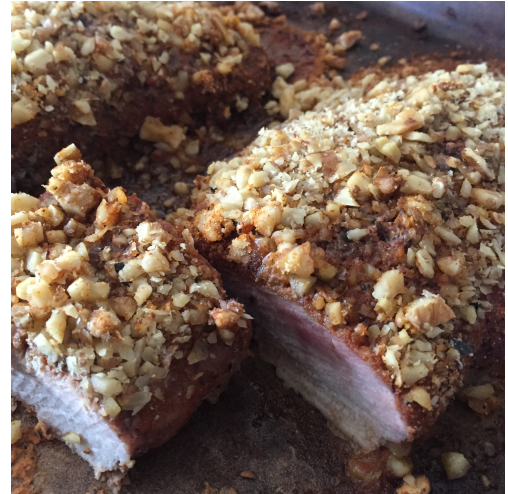
Main Meal #2

This recipe is soooooo tasty! It has a nice crust made of walnuts instead of breadcrumbs, and the spice rub is delicious (Although, if you're not digging one of the spices or you just don't have it on hand, omit it and just add a little more of each of the other spices, or substitute it for something else). This Walnut Crusted Pork Tenderloin goes well with so many side dishes. You can slice it and put it on a salad or bed of greens. Or you can eat it along with the Lemon and Garlic Broccoli with Bacon. Or you can put it with a nicely baked sweet potato. Maybe you'd like it as a side for your eggs in the morning? The possibilities are endless!

Walnut-Crusted Pork Tenderloin (Adapted from "The Whole 30" by Dallas and Melissa Hartwig)

Ingredients:

- 1 lb. pork tenderloin
- 2 tbsp. mustard powder
- 1 tbsp. paprika
- 1 tbsp. onion powder
- 1 tbsp. garlic powder
- ½ tsp. salt
- 1 ½ tsp. black pepper
- ½ c. chopped walnuts
- 3 c. salad greens
- ½ c. balsamic vinaigrette



Directions:

1. Remove pork at least 30 minutes before cooking so that the meat has a chance to get to room temperature.
2. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F.
3. If necessary, trim the pork, and pat the tenderloin dry with a paper towel.
4. Mix the mustard powder, paprika, onion powder, garlic powder, salt, and black pepper in a bowl.
5. Rub the tenderloin evenly with the spice mixture.
6. In a food processor (or by hand), pulse (or chop) the walnuts until finely chopped. Coat the pork evenly with three quarters of the chopped walnuts. Place the tenderloin in a baking pan and roast for 25-30 minutes, until the pork reaches 145 degrees F. Let the pork rest for ten minutes.
7. Slice the tenderloin into ½ in. thick slices, sprinkle with the remaining chopped walnuts, and drizzle with the balsamic vinaigrette. *

*If you know that you and/or your family won't be consuming all of this at once, I wouldn't drizzle the balsamic on it right away. You can add it before re-heating so that it warms up with the pork.

Side Dish #1

This. Is. Delicious. 'Nuff said.

But seriously, this is delicious. It has bacon...BACON! And garlic...GARLIC! And a hint of lemon. Plus, it has protein, plenty of fiber, and heart-healthy benefits. And if you're not a broccoli fan, no problem! Use cauliflower instead. You can even try using other veggies (or a mix of them) because...why not? Oh, and you can make a batch of this and have it all week, so it's definitely worth making a large portion.

Lemon Garlic Broccoli with Bacon (Taken from "Inspiralized" by Ali Mafucci)

Ingredients:

- 3 large broccoli heads with stems*
- 6 bacon slices
- 2 tbsp. olive oil
- ¼ tsp. red pepper flakes
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 5 medium garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- Juice of 1 lemon and zest of half a lemon
- Optional: 3 tbsp. grated Parmesan cheese



Directions:

1. Fill a large saucepan halfway with water and bring to a boil over high heat. Add the broccoli florets. Cook for 2-3 minutes or until easily pierced with a fork (Do not overcook! You want them to be able to be pierced with a fork, but not soft. With the added cook time later, you don't want them to become mushy. Trust me, I've done it. It doesn't look amazing, but if it happens, it'll still taste good.). Drain.
2. Place a large skillet over medium heat. Add the bacon slices in an even layer, cook for about 3 minutes per side (or until desired crispiness), working in batches if needed. Set aside on a paper-towel lined plate to drain.
3. Wipe out the skillet, return it to medium heat, and add the olive oil. When the oil is shimmering, add the broccoli florets and red pepper flakes. Season with salt and pepper. Cover and cook for two minutes, uncovering occasionally to toss.
4. Add the garlic, lemon juice and zest. Cover and cook for another 5 minutes or until the broccoli is lightly browned.
5. Remove from heat and sprinkle on the cheese, if desired. Serve immediately.

Side Dish #2

This side dish reminds me of a potato dish that my gram used to make. It was a coveted dish between my sister, brother and I, and it brings back some good memories. I made it one day when I had leftover pieces of potato from some potatoes that I spiralized. It's quick, easy, tasty, and husband- and kid-approved. Plus, the cool thing is that you can substitute different kinds of potatoes or use a few different ones at the same time for some color and flavor variety. You can also mess around with the spices and garnishes. I love things that are easy and can be put together in a matter of minutes.

Skillet Potatoes

Ingredients:

- 3 russet potatoes (or any kind. I like to throw in some white or orange sweet potatoes, too!)
- 1 small onion, diced
- 2 tbsp. cooking fat of choice
- 1 tbsp. Montreal Steak Seasoning (or any of your favorites – garlic powder, onion powder, oregano)
- Optional: Scallions or fresh parsley for serving



Directions:

1. Peel and thinly slice potatoes. (You can use a mandolin to get evenly sliced potatoes if you'd like. Or you can just cut them into bite-sized chunks.)
2. Heat cooking fat in a skillet until it melts and warms up.
3. Throw in the onion and potatoes and stir occasionally until potatoes are heated through and start to brown.
4. Sprinkle in the Montreal Steak Seasoning and stir.
5. Plate potatoes and garnish with scallions or fresh parsley.

Snack/Dessert

I just found out about this snack/dessert and have had it several times since then. It's delicious. Just look at it! It's warm, filling, and it tastes like banana bread. Plus, I don't have to feel guilty because I'm getting some good carbs and protein in the dish. I also get to use my favorite almond butter—Wegman's Organic Almond Butter—which is super creamy, and the ONLY ingredient is dry roasted almonds!

Baked Banana with Nut Butter

Ingredients:

- 1 medium banana
- 1 tbsp. nut butter of choice
- ½ tsp. cinnamon



Directions:

1. Preheat your oven to 375 degrees F.
2. Using a knife, cut about 1/2" deep down the length of the banana.
3. Using a spoon, widen the cut to make room for the nut butter.
4. Spoon the nut butter into the opening in the banana.
5. Sprinkle with cinnamon.
6. Wrap the banana completely in foil.
7. Place it in the oven and bake for 15 minutes.
8. Remove from the oven and let cool for 1-2 minutes.
9. Unwrap and eat directly from the foil or move to a plate.