

PHOENIX
WELLNESS

HEALTH COACHING

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Week 5 Meal Prep Guide
6-Week Holiday Health Warrior Challenge

Phoenix Wellness

30-Day No Excuses Challenge

Meal Prep Guide – Week 5

Hi! And welcome to week 5 of the 6-Week Holiday Health Warrior Challenge. I'm so excited that you've decided to drop your excuses and take on this fitness and nutrition challenge. There are only 2 weeks left, and when it's over, hopefully you'll find that you'll continue along with the healthy habits you've created during this time. 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, 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 ***sticking to your healthy routines during the holiday season***. 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 ***stay on track during the busiest time of year***.

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!

- **Sweet Potato Egg Cups**
- **Southwest Style Sweet Potato Tacos**
- **Buffalo Chicken Burger**
- **Homemade Fries with Chipotle Ranch Dip**
- **Easy Roasted Sweet Potatoes**
- **Dark Chocolate Covered Coconut Bites**

Breakfast

This was a great recipe that was super quick and easy to make. It stores in the fridge well for days, and is such an easy-to-heat-up kind of breakfast. Plus, the cheese and sweet potato mixture that creates the “cups” for the eggs is a different kind of taste than what I’ve been used to. And if you don’t like sunny side up eggs, you can always scramble them before you add the eggs to the “cups,” It’s your breakfast, do with it what you please!

Sweet Potato Egg Cups (Adapted from the “Fit Foodie Finds” blog)

Ingredients:

- ½ c. grated sweet potatoes
- ¼ c. shredded cheddar cheese
- ½ tbsp. garlic powder
- 8 large eggs
- salt and pepper, to taste



Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F and spray a muffin tin with cooking spray. (You can also place muffin liners in the muffin tin so clean up is a little easier.)
2. Peel a medium sweet potato and use a cheese grater or food processor to grate the potato.
3. Place ½ c. grated sweet potato, ¼ c. cheddar cheese, and ½ tbsp. garlic powder in a bowl and mix until combined.
4. Using a tablespoon as your scooper, scoop one heaping tablespoon of sweet potato mixture on the bottom of 8 muffin tins.
5. Crack a large egg on top of each “cup” and season with salt and pepper to taste.
6. Bake eggs at 375°F for 15-18 minutes or until eggs are at desired done-ness.

**Reheat the next day in the microwave for 30-60 seconds.

Main Meal #1

These were awesome! I loved that they used lettuce instead of a taco shell, and the Jalapeño Avocado Sauce is delicious! Plus, this is another dish where you can add your own toppings, leave stuff out or add other stuff in. The Sweet Potato Bites added a nice little something that I haven't tasted before with tacos. My kids actually made nachos out of them by putting some tortilla chips in the bottom of the bowl and then layering the toppings. They said we could have these again. ;)

Southwest Style Sweet Potato Tacos (From the "With Peanut Butter On Top" blog)

Ingredients

For the Tacos:

- 1 tbsp. olive oil
- ¼ c. yellow onion, chopped
- 1 tbsp. minced garlic
- 1 bell pepper, finely chopped
- 1 lb. lean ground beef
- 2 tbsp. taco seasoning
- 1-2 tbsp. water
- ½ c. frozen corn
- ½ c. black beans, drained and rinsed

Jalapeño Avocado Sauce:

- 1 jalapeño, seeded and stem removed
- ½ avocado, peeled and pitted
- 3 tbsp. Greek yogurt
- 1 tbsp. lime juice
- 1 tbsp. basil pesto
- 2/3 c. cilantro (or parsley), loosely packed
- ½ tsp. minced garlic
- ¼- ½ tsp. salt, to taste
- ¼ c. milk of choice (or water), to thin

Exrtras:

- One batch of the Easy Roasted Sweet Potatoes (Side Dish #2)

Optional Garnishes:

- Jalapeños
- Salsa
- Guacamole
- Tortilla Strips
- Shredded Cheddar Cheese
- Freshly chopped cilantro or parsley



Directions:

1. If you haven't already, start with making the Easy Roasted Sweet Potato Bites. While they are baking, prep your tacos by chopping the onion, garlic, and bell pepper, as well as your garnishes. Halfway through the potato bake time, place a nonstick skillet over medium-high heat and heat the olive oil.
2. Once heated, add the chopped onion and pepper. Sauté for 2-3 minutes, or until the peppers are softened and the onions are translucent. Add the garlic and allow to cook for 1-2 minutes before adding the ground beef.

3. Break apart the beef as it cooks. Add the taco seasoning with 1-2 tbsp. water to fully incorporate the seasoning mixture. Add in corn and black beans to warm. Cook until beef has browned.
4. While the taco mixture is cooking, prepare the Jalapeño Avocado Sauce by adding all the ingredients into a blender or food processor. Process until it reaches a smooth, creamy consistency. Set aside until needed (refrigerate if it will be a while before you use it).
5. Layer the taco: 1 Boston lettuce leaf, ¼ c. taco mixture, 2 tbsp. sweet potato bites, 1 tbsp. shredded cheddar (if using), 1 tbsp. tortilla strips, 1 tbsp. Jalapeño Avocado Sauce, 2 cherry tomatoes (halved).

Main Meal #2

This was an awesome dinner. It took about 5 minutes to put the Buffalo Chicken Burgers together and another 5 minutes to prep the Homemade Fries with Homemade Ranch Dip. Easiest dinner prep ever. It was also delicious and approved by all family members. The burgers carry a little bit of delayed spice. Not too bad, but it is there, FYI.

Buffalo Chicken Burgers (Adapted from the “With Peanut Butter on Top” blog)

Ingredients:

- 1 lb. ground chicken
- ¼ c. Panko bread crumbs
- ¼ c. hot sauce of choice
- 2 tbsp. feta (or blue cheese crumbles)
- 1 tsp. minced garlic (2 cloves)
- ¼ c. onion, chopped
- ½ tsp. dried dill
- 1 tsp. garlic powder
- ¼ tsp. cayenne pepper
- 1 large egg
- Salt and pepper, to taste

For cooking:

- 1 tbsp. olive oil
- 1 c. chicken stock



I was plating this meal (easiest meal ever), and forgot to take a pic of just the burger. So, here it's shown with some mustard, dill relish, and jalapeños, plus all the sides (broccoli, homemade sweet potato and russet fries and the chipotle ranch dip).

Directions:

1. Place a non-stick skillet over medium heat and add olive oil.
2. Put all ingredients for the burgers into a large mixing bowl and mix together with your hands making sure the ingredients are mixed thoroughly.
3. Form the chicken into 6 patties. Place the burgers onto the skillet, pressing down slightly with a spatula to flatten.
4. Pour ½ c. chicken stock over the patties. Allow to cook for 4-5 minutes before flipping.
5. Once flipped, pour the remaining ½ c. chicken stock over the burgers. Remove from the heat and place the patties onto a plate lined with a paper towel.

Side Dish #1

I have been making these homemade fries for years. And it was only a month or two ago that I got smart and started using my mandolin to slice the potatoes to a desired thickness. Man did that save some time. You can season these with whatever spices you really like – super versatile – even salt and pepper work! And the Ranch Dip is awesome and goes with just about everything.

**The original recipe calls for white potatoes, but you can make them with sweet potatoes too. I did both when I made them this past week. My boys love the white potatoes, and my husband loves the sweet potatoes. Who am I to disappoint?

**If you have leftovers, store them in an airtight container in the fridge. I like to heat them up in the toaster oven to avoid soggy fries.

Homemade French Fries with Chipotle Ranch Dip (Adapted from the “Paleo Running Momma” blog)

Ingredients:

For the Fries:

- 2 medium-large Russet potatoes, peeled and rinsed
- 1 tbsp. olive oil
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- ¼ tsp. onion powder, optional

For the Ranch Dip:

- 1 c. mayo
- 1 tsp. chipotle chili powder
- 1 tsp. lemon or lime juice
- 1 ½ tsp. onion powder
- 1 tsp. garlic powder
- 1 tsp. smoked paprika
- 2 tsp. dried chives
- Salt, to taste (optional)



Here are the sweet potato fries that I hand cut along with the russet potatoes I cut with the mandolin so you can see the difference. You can always cut the russet potatoes by and or the sweet potatoes with the mandolin, too.

Directions:

1. Pre-heat the oven to 425°F. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper.
2. Cut your potatoes into ½ in. fries, then pat them dry to absorb as much moisture as possible. (Or you can use your mandolin slicer to create fries that look like half moons.)
3. Put the fries in a large bowl and toss evenly with the oil, salt and pepper, and onion powder, if using. Make sure the fries are evenly coated with oil.
4. Spread out the fries on the baking sheets with some space between each one (this ensures crispier fries).
5. Bake at 425°F for 20 minutes, turn them over and bake for another 15-20 minutes until golden and crispy.
6. While the fries bake, whisk all ingredients together for the ranch and refrigerate until fries are done. Serve with thinly sliced scallions or chives, if desired.

Side Dish #2

What could be better than sweet potatoes cut into small pieces, seasoned to perfection and baked until browned and crispy? Not much. That's what. These bad boys make a great side dish to just about anything, and they're used to add some texture to the Southwest Sweet Potato Tacos. If you're not a huge fan of sweet potatoes, go ahead and use white ones. Don't like some of the spices? Leave them out and add your own mixture. The possibilities are endless.

Roasted Sweet Potato Bites (Adapted from the blog "With Peanut Butter on Top")

Ingredients

- 2 large sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into ½ inch cubes
- 1 tbsp. olive oil
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- ½ tsp garlic powder
- ¼ tsp. paprika
- ¼ tsp dried oregano
- ¼ tsp. onion powder
- ¼ tsp. chili powder
- 1/8 tsp. cayenne pepper



This is not my picture. I forgot to take one, and then the Roasted Sweet Potato Bites were all gone. Oops. But, this is what they look like. And I do have a stoneware pan like that, but that spatula is way fancier than mine.

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 425°F. Place sweet potatoes in a large bowl and drizzle with olive oil. Toss until the sweet potatoes are coated.
2. Combine all seasonings into a small bowl. Once mixed, slowly incorporate the seasonings, mixing well to evenly coat.
3. Place sweet potatoes on 2 baking sheets and roast 20 minutes, stirring or flipping occasionally until browned and tender. Roast for another 10-15 minutes until browned. Keep an eye on them toward the end, checking every few minutes to make sure they don't burn. Remove from oven and enjoy!

Dessert

Dark chocolate? Coconut? Enough said. These beauties are healthy and filling. 2 is a good serving size as you'll find that they're really rich. It satisfies the chocolate and sweet cravings you might be having. **A note on using the coconut oil...I put the coconut oil in as a solid. I use a heavy spoon to mix as much as I can, and then I get down and dirty and start mixing (well, completely squishing it up) with my hands. It may seem at first like there's not enough moisture, but once you get in there with your hands, you'll see that it all comes together.

Dark Chocolate Covered Coconut Bites

Ingredients:

- 2 cups shredded coconut (unsweetened)
- 4 tablespoons honey or maple syrup
- 5 tablespoons coconut oil
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 4 ounces dark chocolate for melting (i.e. chocolate chips. I like to use "Green & Black's 85% Dark Chocolate" Bar. It melts better than any other high-quality chocolate I have tried, and I've tried a lot of them. It can be found in the Organic section at Top's or Wegman's.)



Directions:

1. Put the coconut in a bowl. Add the honey or maple syrup, coconut oil, and vanilla. Stir until a thick paste forms.
2. Using your hands, squeeze the mixture into about 18 small balls. I found that rolling was difficult because they weren't sticky enough, but I was able to shape them into balls by first squeezing them in my palm a few times (you'll get some oil on your hands), and then gently shaping it from an oval into a round ball. Place the coconut balls in the freezer for about 30 minutes or until firm.
3. Melt the chocolate until smooth and spreadable. (If you use the Green and Black's Chocolate, you can easily melt it in the microwave.)
4. Lay out a sheet of wax paper. Using two forks, roll each coconut ball in the chocolate until completely covered. Scoop the ball out with the fork and let the extra chocolate drip off the fork. Gently nudge the chocolate covered ball onto wax paper and chill until the chocolate has hardened. Store in the refrigerator or freezer.