

*7 Key Ways to
Eat Healthy with
a Busy Lifestyle*



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All of us running around, trying to keep up in what feels like a never-ending race and it seems like we need a 10-day week, because the 7 days we *do* have aren't quite enough to cover all the things we need to do. From late nights to early meetings to deadlines - it all takes its toll on our health.

It starts with not getting enough sleep, then you stop hydrating, then you miss meals altogether. And when that happens, you feel famished so you grab the easiest thing on hand to munch on which almost always isn't the healthiest of choices.

Meghan Telpner is a holistic lifestyle consultant based in Toronto. She also knows how to eat healthy despite your hectic schedule. Telpner states, "There are four [fundamental aspects] to eating well when busy; intention, organization, preparation and eating healthy." These four elements are the foundation of maintaining a healthy lifestyle even when your schedule is frantic.

The following are seven tips for eating healthy on a busy schedule. Try them so you can get the most of out of meals health-wise, while boosting your metabolism, increasing your focus and concentration abilities, while keeping the unwanted pounds off.

1. Never Skip Breakfast

You probably know that breakfast is the most important meal of the day - you've heard it a million times. However, some mornings, you're scrambling to get yourself out the door that you can't help but postpone breakfast, or even miss it altogether. And that's one of the worst things you can do for your mental and physical health.

You need roughly 15 minutes each morning to get a good, hearty breakfast. This helps keep blood sugar levels at a balance, which keeps your mind focused and alert. In order to make sure you don't miss the most important meal of the day, prepare what you need the night before.

For example, make healthy muffins, granola, and salads the night before. Then warm up in the morning, and you're ready to go. You can also steam fruits and vegetables for a healthy breakfast. Of course, you can't forget smoothies that only take a minute to make but fill you up and nourish you. Plus the possibilities of what to add to your smoothie are endless.

The main thing to remember is to resist the urge to bulk up on breakfast foods rich in sugar and simple carbohydrates, like white bread, artificial syrups, and pastries. They will only send your blood sugar levels soaring immediately, then shortly after, they will crash and you'll feel like you're drained and need a nap - just as your morning is actually about to begin and you need to be at your sharpest.

Instead, choose breakfast foods that contain:

- Fiber (whole grain bread, muffins and cereals; quinoa; brown and wild rice)
- Protein (eggs, nuts, seeds, organic cow's milk)
- Complex carbohydrates (fruits, vegetables, oatmeal)
- Healthy fats (avocados, olive oil, seeds and nuts)

2. Be a Smart Snacker

We love snacking. It's the answer to every problem - we're hungry, we're bored, we're with friends, we're alone. And during a busy week, things are no different

Make it a point to eat a healthy snack every 3-4 hours, which can be difficult if you're tied up with work. So put the right kinds of snack near you, so you don't reach for a bag of chips or pretzels in a moment of weakness.

Pack your own small bags of vegetables, or buy them pre-packaged. Place them in your bag, desk drawer or work fridge. They're great to munch on during the day, plus they contain a lot of vitamins and minerals to get your brain working and your body energized.

- Nuts are a great snack for when you crave something crunchy and salty.
- Granola bars are delicious and healthy. Plus they fill you up without adding on the calories.
- Trail mixes are easy to make on your own, or you can just buy some that have been already prepared.
- Dried fruit are also a great choice.

3. Plan Ahead

It may seem counter-intuitive to plan your entire week's meals, even out of the question. However, you have to take a step back and see the whole picture. Preparing a week's menu will only consume a couple of hours during the weekend, but it'll save you the trouble of having to reach for fattening foods when you're starving yet too tired to blink, let alone stand in the kitchen and prepare a meal.

There is a slew of apps designed to help you plan your meals for an entire week. Alternatively, you can just use plain old pen and paper to jot down recipe ideas. In addition, if you need to buy some things make a list and focus on healthy choices when you're out grocery shopping.

One of the easiest things to prepare in advance is chicken. Cook chicken pieces and place them in separate bags in the freezer. That way, whenever you're in a hurry, you can quickly thaw some chicken and your main protein ingredient is good to go. You can add shredded chicken breasts to salads, stir-fry or with lettuce and tomato on whole wheat. Protein is certainly one of the best options to boost your energy and keep you full longer.

4. Take your Vitamins

If your body is lacking in certain minerals or vitamins, you'll start feeling depressed, groggy, and exhausted. Nutrients, such as vitamin B12, iron, fatty acids, and probiotics are all things we don't get enough of and can be difficult to get what you need through regular meals. It's important to include a supplement or multivitamin to your regular diet to make sure your body is getting what it needs.

5. Soups and Stews

Known as comfort foods, soups and stews can save you time and money, while giving you a boost of healthy nutrients and they're easy to make. Just choose the vegetables you want, fresh or frozen, and make big batches, then freeze them in separate bags.

6. Hydrate

We all can't live without coffee. We rush to drink a cup of our favorite java in the morning, in the early afternoon, late afternoon, when we're having a late night so we can meet our deadline. However, the truth is, more than 4 cups of coffee a day will make you feel sluggish and dehydrated, not to mention overburden your liver.

A great alternative is to replace coffee with herbal teas, which will still give you the caffeine boost, you need without putting too much pressure on your liver or making you feel dehydrated.

Alcohol is also another thing that wreaks havoc on your liver. It dehydrates you and increases your appetite, while decreasing your cognitive abilities.

On the other hand, the one drink you can never have too much of is water. It has 0 calories, it's fat-free, boosts your concentration, and energizes your muscles so you maintain your strength and focus throughout the day. Moreover, it helps with the digestive process and suppresses your hunger pangs. An easy way to never forget to drink water is to carry a bottle with you to work. Leave it on your desk in plain sight so you constantly remember to take a few sips every now and then.

7. Be a Savvy Diner

Who doesn't love to eat out? It's easy, fast, and hassle-free. However, when you're eating out, avoid all fast food, deep-fried and processed foods since they're high in calories and fat. Instead, choose foods that are baked, grilled, broiled, roasted, or steamed.

A Final Note

You know that saying, "you are what you eat"? Well, it's true. If you're skipping meals all day to come home at the end of the day, late at night, exhausted, famished and pumped up on caffeine and sugar all day, then it'll start showing on your face and pretty soon in your behavior. Your brain will also start to suffer. You'll feel worn out, unhappy and bulky.

But while it may sound impossible to overcome, all it needs is a little planning, some preparation and a huge dose of commitment so you can put your health before anything else. It's the only way you'll lead a healthier, more balanced life, which will keep you disease-free and full of energy and productivity. Only then will you be able to handle a busy schedule with the ease of a superhero.

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