

Meal Planning Worksheet

This worksheet is intended to make your life easier. With a little bit of work upfront, you can set your weeknight dinners up for success. This is the blank worksheet, but I will also attach my own filled in worksheet to help you understand how I use it.

#1

Make a list of meals that:

- a) your family will eat without complaint (at least much complaint)
- b) is on the healthy side, and
- c) can be produced in 30 minutes or less (*it's okay to list meals here that take slightly more prep time if you can do some of that prep ahead of time like weekends or mornings)

Try to gather at least 5 meals here. It's also okay if you just list one component of a meal (i.e. taco meat). We can use that to build a meal later on.

#2

Take your list of meals from the previous page and group them into similar categories. Look for themes like:

- Ethnic flavors like Mexican, Italian, Greek, Asian, Indian etc.
- Preparation technique like grilled, slow cooker, freezer meal etc.
- Other options: Breakfast for dinner, Dad cooks (if he doesn't usually), Kid cooks, Kid's choice, Fish night

#3

Look at your calendar and determine what your evenings look like. Some nights you might have more time to prep dinner than others. On really busy nights, would it be helpful to have dinner ready in the crockpot for when everyone is ready to eat? Or, can that be a meal you prep on the weekend? Also, consider giving each night of the week a theme. Ever heard of Taco Tuesday? You'd be surprised how calming it can be for your brain to have this kind of routine and to know each week what your family will be eating for dinner.

#4

Set up your meal plan calendar. The minimum is one week and I would not suggest creating more than 4 weeks of calendars (I prefer a 2 week rotating meal plan-that's what I use). Once you create this, you will rotate through them. Think that your family will get bored having the same meals on repeat every other week? They really won't. If you find that everyone gets tired of a meal in your rotation, then remove that one and bring in another. For this reason, it's okay if you don't have each of your meals represented on your meal plan. You'll have time in the future to bring your other favorites in.

#5

Technically you're done. Congratulations! For extra credit, take each of your weekly meal plans and create a shopping list that covers each ingredient in each meal...including spices and condiments. You can also add the foods to the list that you buy on a weekly basis like: breakfast, lunches, snacks, and drinks. Then, when it's time to shop, take a quick peek in your fridge and cabinet and cross off what you don't need (or highlight what you do need). If you do this part, the only part of your planning for week will be checking your list, shopping, and prepping. If don't right, this can easily shave a couple of hours off your weekly planning.