

Meal Builder

A practical way to turn the food you already eat into a meal that is nourishing, satisfying and realistic for your day.

THE IDEA

There is no perfect plate and every meal does not need every component. First notice what the meal provides; then ask whether it works for you.

WHAT DOES THE MEAL PROVIDE?

PROTEIN

Supports muscle and other tissues and contributes to satiety.

FIBRE

From vegetables, fruit, legumes, whole grains, nuts and seeds; supports gut health and fullness.

HEALTHY FATS

For example nuts, seeds, olive oil, avocado and oily fish.

CARBOHYDRATES

Provide energy. Found in fruit, legumes, oats and other whole grains, potatoes, bread, rice and pasta. Their quality and fibre content vary.

DOES THE MEAL WORK FOR YOU?

NUTRITION

Does it provide a useful mix of nutrients rather than mainly calories?

SATIETY

Does it satisfy you without leaving you hungry soon afterwards or uncomfortably full?

FLAVOUR & ENJOYMENT

Does it taste good enough that you would genuinely want to eat it again?

1 Start with a meal you actually eat

Which meal do you want to work on?

☐ Breakfast

☐ Lunch

☐ Dinner

Not sure where to start? Breakfast can be a useful place to begin because it often sets the pattern for hunger, energy and food choices later in the day.

WHAT DO YOU USUALLY EAT?

WHAT DO YOU DEFINITELY WANT TO KEEP - AND WHY?

Taste, convenience, tradition, comfort, price, family preference, habit and enjoyment are all valid reasons to keep something.

ITEM	WHY KEEP IT?	PROT.	FIBRE	FATS	CARB BASE	NUTR.	SAT.	FLAV.
		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2 Look at the meal as a whole

Use the six lenses again. Also notice the carbohydrate base of the meal: is it one part of a balanced meal, or is it doing most of the work?

PROTEIN

☐ working

☐ could use more

FIBRE

☐ working

☐ could use more

HEALTHY FATS

☐ working

☐ could use more

NUTRITION

☐ working

☐ could use more

SATIETY

☐ working

☐ could use more

FLAVOUR & ENJOYMENT

☐ working

☐ could use more

BUILD A MEAL THAT WORKS IN REAL LIFE

Improve what matters most without turning every meal into a project.

3 Choose one useful upgrade

Often you do not need a new recipe. Choose the type of upgrade that would help this meal most.

ADD PROTEIN

Yoghurt, eggs, tofu, beans, lentils, fish or chicken. Add chickpeas or edamame to a salad or soup.

ADD FIBRE

Vegetables, fruit, legumes, whole grains, nuts or seeds. Add an extra vegetable, berries, oats or beans.

ADD HEALTHY FATS

Nuts, seeds, olive oil, avocado, tahini or oily fish can add flavour and staying power.

ADD FLAVOUR OR TEXTURE

Herbs, spices, acidity, crunch, fermented foods, sauces or a simple dressing can change the whole meal.

CHECK THE CARBOHYDRATE BASE

Carbohydrate-rich foods can differ greatly. Notice whether yours are mostly simple or complex, fibre-rich or more refined, and what they add to the meal beyond energy.

Carbohydrates can absolutely belong in a meal. Notice whether they are paired with protein, fibre, healthy fats and vegetables in a way that fits the meal, your appetite, activity and preferences.

MY SMALLEST USEFUL CHANGE _____

4 Make it enjoyable enough to repeat

Nutrition is only useful if you actually want to eat the meal. Small additions can change the whole experience.

FRESH / ACIDIC

Lemon, vinegar, tomato, pickles, fermented vegetables.

CREAMY

Hummus, yoghurt, tahini, avocado.

CRUNCHY

Nuts, seeds, raw vegetables.

HERBS & SPICES

Fresh or dried herbs, chilli, cumin, paprika, pepper.

A LITTLE SWEETNESS

Fruit, berries or roasted vegetables when they fit.

TEXTURE

Combine soft, crisp, warm or cool when it improves the meal.

MAKE IT WORK ON BUSY DAYS

Planning and fallback options make a good meal easier to repeat when life gets crowded.

5 Plan for busy days

Do the thinking when you have time, so a busy day does not have to become a nutrition decision from scratch.

PREPARE AHEAD

Cook extra grains or legumes, boil eggs, chop vegetables, make dressing or portion leftovers.

KEEP SHORTCUTS AVAILABLE

Frozen vegetables, canned legumes, eggs, yoghurt or kefir, wholegrain bread, hummus, nuts and seeds.

HAVE A FALLBACK MEAL

Keep one or two combinations you can make almost automatically when plans fall apart.

QUICK FALLBACK IDEAS

QUICK BREAKFAST

Yoghurt or kefir + oats + fruit + mixed nuts or seeds. Eggs + wholegrain bread + tomatoes or spinach.

QUICK LUNCH

Soup + beans or lentils + bread. Sandwich + protein filling + a side salad or raw vegetables.

QUICK DINNER

Frozen vegetables + beans/tofu/eggs + a grain or potatoes + sauce, herbs or spices.

ASSEMBLY MEAL

Vegetables + ready legumes + protein + nuts/seeds + hummus or dressing. No elaborate cooking required.

MY BUSY-DAY FALLBACK

6 Review the meal, not yourself

DID IT SATISFY ME?

Was I comfortably satisfied until I next needed to eat?

DID I ENJOY IT?

Would I genuinely want to eat this meal again?

WHAT WORKED?

What made the meal easier, tastier or more satisfying?

ENERGY AFTERWARDS

How were my energy levels in the hours after eating?

WHAT WOULD I CHANGE?

What would I add, remove, swap, prepare differently or keep the same?
