

Healthy Lunches



**Nutrition:
Back to Basics**

Bringing your lunch to work is a great way to meet your health goals AND save you time & money! Win win win. Even if you are working from home, it is a great habit to prep your lunch the night before so you are ready to go. Here are some tips on packing a balanced lunch that will taste good and keep you full.

1. Start with the right hardware

Before you begin, make sure you have what you need to actually transport your lunch to work. Check out some of my favorites: [reusable zip lock bags](#), [lunch box](#), [food storage containers](#), and [mason jars](#).

2. Make it balanced

Your lunch should fill you up and prevent you from hitting a wall at 2pm. In order to do so, it should contain these 4 things:

- Protein (chicken, turkey, tuna, salmon, eggs, Greek yogurt)
- Fiber (low carb wrap/bread, corn, beans, sweet potato)
- Fat (avocado, nuts, salad dressing, olive oil, cheese, seeds)
- Veggies (salad, carrots, cucumber, celery, peppers, tomatoes)

3. Utilize Left Overs

One of the best ways to make sure you will have a balanced lunch is to bring left over dinner from the night before. If necessary, tweak your meal to make sure it has all of the components above. You may want to supplement with a side of raw veggies and dip! This may require some planning ahead to make sure you make enough food. Writing down a plan of what you will bring for you lunch for the week will ensure that you have all of the components that you need.

4. Rethink traditional lunches

Build a healthy sandwich

1. Choose a lower carb, whole grain bread like Dave's killer bread thin sliced or Joseph's tortilla.
2. Choose a lean, minimally processed protein like homemade chicken salad/egg salad/tuna salad, sliced roasted turkey, left over chicken
3. Add a portion of a healthy fat (mayo or cheese counts as your fat, but you could also try 1/4 of an avocado or 2 Tbsp hummus instead!)
4. Load up the veggies in the sandwich AND on the side. Slice up some cucumbers/tomato or have a salad on the side instead of chips

Build a healthy salad

1. Choose your base. This can be any leafy greens that you like. While the darker greens tend to contain more nutrients, iceberg lettuce is perfectly fine, too!
2. Add more colors. Strive for 3 different colored veggies in your salad! Try rainbow carrots, yellow peppers, red onions, and radishes.
3. Add a lean protein like grilled chicken, salmon, hard boiled eggs
4. Pick a high fiber starch like a wheat pita, chickpeas, or whole grain crackers and stick to 1 serving size
5. Measure dressing to 2 Tbsp (If you are using a fat free dressing, add a portion of a fat onto the salad (1 oz nuts/seeds/cheese, 1/4 avocado). The fat helps you absorb all of the vitamins from the veggies!

Build a healthy lunchable

1. Choose a veggie. Strive for 1 cup. Raw veggies work best
2. Add 1/2 cup of your favorite fruit
3. Add a lean protein; Greek yogurt, cottage cheese, left over chicken, hard boiled eggs
4. Add a fat like 1 oz of nuts/seeds/cheese or 1 Tbsp nut butter
5. Add a fun dip! 2 Tbsp hummus, guacamole, or tzatziki
6. Tip: sectioned tupperware/meal prep containers are great for making DIY lunchables!

Make your own soup

Canned soups/soups from the cafeteria are often too low in calories/protein to keep you full, and very high in sodium. Homemade soups, however, make great lunch options! Make a big batch ahead of time for the week. Here are a few favorites: veggie loaded turkey chili, classic chicken noodle.