

The background of the image shows several glass jars filled with meal-prepped ingredients. The jars are stacked on a granite countertop. The ingredients visible include sliced cucumbers, cherry tomatoes, chickpeas, and quinoa. The text is overlaid on a semi-transparent white box in the center of the image.

*A Quick Start
Beginner's Guide*
**To Meal Prep
Like a Pro**
This Weekend!

Bonus meal plan with recipes
and shopping list

Hi I'm Tammy

My name is Tammy, the blogger behind Organize Yourself Skinny and author of this quick-start meal prep guide.

The goal of this guide is to get you started on your meal prep journey **this weekend**.

No more excuses. No more procrastination.

But, before I jump into everything let me share a snapshot of my personal meal prep journey.

I started my meal prep journey way back in 2010.

Truth be told, I didn't even realize I was meal prepping at the time. Nope. The only thing I knew was I wanted to lose weight.

I had my "a-ha" moment and, for the first time ever, was finally serious about making big changes to my lifestyle.

The only issue... I had no idea how to cook healthy meals every single night. I worked 40+ hours a week and my girls were little - I barely had time to shower. Sound familiar? Yup, it was a constant hamster wheel of chaos.

Then, it occurred to me that I could make our dinners ahead of time. Ground breaking, I know! Ha!

Of course, I really didn't know how but I figured it was the only way I could eat healthy every. single. day.





So, I took time every couple weeks to prepare meals.

I started with family favorites like taco meat, sauce, and other easy recipes. I'd keep some in the refrigerator for that week and then store the rest in the freezer for the following week.

Once I got comfortable making dinners I started to prepare breakfast and lunches ahead of time.

It didn't take long for me to prioritize time on the weekends to make sure all meals were ready for the week.

I realized that a few hours on the weekend dedicated to meal prep added more time into my week.

This was a total game changer. Honestly, meal prep completely changed my life.

Listen, I know this sounds a bit dramatic, but it's true. There's no way I could've stuck to any type of healthy diet if I didn't meal prep. Eating healthier is so much easier when foods are ready to cook and eat.

Like I said, I started to meal prep because I wanted to lose weight. However, I quickly learned that it wasn't just about weight loss.

Sure, I dropped 40lbs, thanks in large part to meal prep, but my life significantly improved in other ways.

I felt in control of my life.

For example, the weekly stress I felt trying to get dinner on the table every night was significantly reduced. I knew what we were eating and it was ready to warm up as soon as we walked in the door.

I also saved hundreds of dollars on groceries because, again, we knew what we were eating and it was ready ahead of time. Food wasted was reduced significantly.

"This was a total game changer. Honestly, meal prep completely changed my life."

In the end, meal prep helped me go from overwhelmed and frazzled to confident and calm.

True story!

This is why I continue to meal prep to this day.

If you can relate to anything I've talked about so far then you're in the right place.

Meal prep is the #1 piece of advice I give to anyone looking for a solution to eating healthier, reducing stress, or saving money.

Alright, let's keep it moving...

I put together this beginner's guide to help you get started with meal prep right away - like, this weekend. I know it's easy to procrastinate with new habits. Mostly, because we don't know where to start or are afraid of screwing up. I understand.

I'm here to break it down for you.

I'm going to give you my best beginner tips, basic meal prep recipes, a simple meal plan using those recipes, and show you how to put together a meal prep day.

The goal is for you to start the meal prep habit this weekend. *I don't want you to put it off any longer.*





FIRST, LET'S CHAT ABOUT EXPECTATIONS...

I'll provide all the information, but I'll need you to take some action.

Here's what you'll need to do:

- **You'll need to get meal prep containers.** When I first started I used what I had. So, I don't think you need to go out and purchase everything brand new. However, if you can't find lids to most of your containers, or they're old, then I recommend picking up some new ones. My favorite containers are Pyrex Simply store glass containers, Mason Jars (16-ounce and 32-ounce), and 36-ounce Snapware glass containers. These containers can be purchased from Amazon, Target, or Walmart. I'll provide meal prep container recommendations with each of the recipes. Again, you don't need anything fancy but you will need containers to get started.
- **You'll need to go grocery shopping.** Yes, I know, duh. But, back in the day I went grocery shopping on a whim, without any real plan. I need you to plan for a grocery shopping trip. I recommend doing this on Friday or Saturday. Don't grocery shop and meal prep on the same day. You'll end up exhausted and overwhelmed. Trust me, been there, done that.
- **You'll need to carve out 3 hours for meal prep.** There are weeks I do more than 3 hours and some I do less. But for your first week I'd plan for a few hours. I put together easy starter recipes but, keep in mind, this is your first time meal prepping so it could take a little longer. Don't let this discourage you. The more you meal prep the easier it'll get.
- **You'll need to eat your meals.** Again, I know this is like "duh" but I can't tell you the number of times readers tell me they "forgot" to eat their meals. Make sure to look at your schedule prior to making the food. If you know you're going out to dinner or lunch then plan accordingly. Also, it helps to keep everything organized in the refrigerator where you can see it.



BEGINNER MEAL PREP TIPS

Here are some other beginner tips to consider when planning your meal prep day.

Look at your schedule and answer this question - what meal (or meals) if prepped ahead of time would make the biggest impact on my week? For example, do you struggle with lunches or are there a couple of nights that are busier than usual? If you can only prep a few things then choose the ones that'll help the most.

Put together a meal plan that fits your schedule. Then based on the answer to the question above list out the meals you'll prep ahead of time. Of course, you can meal prep as many recipes as you want but if you're short on time then stick with the most important recipes to have prepped ahead. Always remember this → *even a small amount of meal prep can make a big difference in your life.*

Clean out the refrigerator. Get rid of everything that's expired and/or you won't eat. Then give it a good wipe down. You want to start meal prep day with a clean refrigerator and room for all of your delicious meals. If you haven't done this in a while then this might take some extra time. However, this is something I do each week prior to meal prep and now it only takes about 15 - 20 minutes to get the refrigerator cleaned and ready for the week.

Get organized the day before meal prep. This means clean the kitchen and get your containers together. Make sure you have all utensils, pots, and pans needed. The goal is to wake up on meal prep day ready to cook. Trust me, if you try to get organized on meal prep day you'll be exhausted before even starting.

Wake up early and start meal prepping. Of course, you can meal prep whenever it fits into your schedule. However, from experience, I recommend getting started early. Basically, the sooner you start the sooner you can be finished.

Read through ALL of the recipes prior to cooking them. This is so important especially if you haven't cooked the recipes before. Doing so will assure you have all the ingredients and tools you need to cook and prep everything.



LET'S GET COOKING

Here are the recipes I've included in the meal plan:

Breakfast

- Steel Cut Oats

Lunch

- Protein Power Mason Jar Salad

Dinner

- Chicken Quesadillas
- Cheeseburger Wraps
- Pizza Soup
- Italian Turkey Meatloaf
- Slow Cooker Sausage and Peppers Hoagies

Each recipe has the ingredients listed along with cooking and meal prep instructions.

After the recipes I included a grocery list and instructions for planning out your meal prep day. Please note in the instructions I show you how to prep all the recipes but don't feel pressure to prep each one. The goal is to get started this weekend and if that means you can only prep 1-2 recipes then that's totally fine.

Again, focus on the recipe that will make the biggest impact on your week if planned ahead of time.

TIME TO MEAL PREP!

MEAL PREP RECIPES

STEEL CUT OATS – 8- 10 SERVINGS

INGREDIENTS

- 2 Tbsp coconut oil or butter
 - 6 cups hot water
 - 2 cups steel cut oats
 - 2 cups unsweetened almond or coconut milk
 - 2 tsp vanilla extract
 - maple syrup to serve
 - 3-cup or larger glass (or plastic) containers
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COOKING & MEAL PREP INSTRUCTIONS

Step 1: Heat coconut oil in a medium to large pot until melted, add in the steel cut oats and cook for 2 -3 minutes or until toasted and fragrant. **Step 2:** Add in the water and bring to a boil. Reduce to a simmer and cook for 25 - 30 minutes, uncovered. The oats will start to thicken and absorb the water. **Step 3:** Stir in the milk and vanilla. Simmer for another 15 minutes. **Step 4:** Remove from heat and let it sit for 5 minutes or so. The oatmeal will thicken as it sits. **Meal prep instructions:** Place oatmeal in glass (or plastic) containers and store in the refrigerator. You can divide this into individual containers or store in larger containers. To reheat, place oatmeal into a microwave bowl and heat for 1-2 minutes until heated through. Stir in pure maple syrup.

PROTEIN POWER MASON JAR SALAD – 5 SERVINGS

INGREDIENTS

- 5 (32-ounce) Mason Jars
 - 5 Tbsp Olive Oil & Vinegar Dressing (I like Newmans Own)
 - 1-quart grape tomatoes, halved
 - 2 large cucumbers, chopped
 - 1/2 of a red onion, chopped
 - 1 (15-ounce) can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
 - 1 1/4 cup cooked quinoa
 - 10 Tbsp crumbled feta
 - 5 hard-boiled eggs, chopped
 - 5 cups super greens or baby spinach
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COOKING & MEAL PREP INSTRUCTIONS

Step 1: Divide all of the ingredients into the mason jars. Start with the dressing and then continue with the tomatoes, cucumbers, onion, chickpeas, quinoa, feta, eggs, and finish with greens. **Step 2:** Place the lid tightly onto the jar and refrigerate. When you're ready to eat the salad, give it a couple shakes and then pour into a bowl.

MEAL PREP RECIPES

CHICKEN QUESADILLAS - 6-8 SERVINGS

INGREDIENTS

- 2 lbs boneless skinless chicken breasts
 - 1 (15.5 ounce) jar of salsa
 - Juice of ½ lime
 - 8 tortillas
 - 1 cup taco cheese
 - Hot sauce or taco sauce (optional)
 - 3 - 4 cup glass or plastic containers and/or plastic wrap
-

COOKING & MEAL PREP INSTRUCTIONS

Step 1: Place the chicken and salsa in a 6-quart slow cooker and cook for 4-5 hours on low. **Step 2:** Remove the chicken and place into a medium to large bowl. Using two forks, shred the chicken. Add in 1/2 cup or so of the leftover sauce in the slow cooker to the chicken to keep it moist. **Step 3:** Squirt the lime on the chicken and mix. **Step 4:** Place 1/3 cup of the shredded chicken into the center of a tortilla. Sprinkle with 2 tablespoons of cheese and a dash or so of taco sauce or hot sauce, if using. **Step 5:** Fold over the tortilla and cook using a grill pan or large frying pan, sprayed with cooking spray. Cook for about 3 minutes on each side or until brown or grill marks form. Also, you want the cheese to be melted. **Meal prep instructions:** Store the shredded chicken in containers and refrigerator until ready to make the quesadillas. You can also prepare the quesadillas and wrap in plastic wrap. When ready to cook remove the plastic wrap and cook in a large frying pan or grill pan. Last you can store all the ingredients separately into a large freezer bag and freeze into a kit. Thaw in the refrigerator the day before and heat up chicken in microwave before cooking the quesadillas.



MEAL PREP RECIPES

CHEESEBURGER WRAP - 5 -SERVINGS

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound ground beef
 - 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
 - 1 tablespoon ketchup
 - 1 tablespoon grated parmesan
 - 1 teaspoon onion powder
 - 1 teaspoon garlic powder
 - 1/8 teaspoon salt
 - 1/8 teaspoon pepper
 - 5 medium wraps
 - 5 slices American cheese
 - 2 roma tomatoes, sliced
 - 1 medium white onion, diced
 - Romaine lettuce
 - Additional ketchup (optional)
 - Mustard (optional)
 - Mayo (optional)
 - 3-4 cup glass or plastic containers
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COOKING & MEAL PREP INSTRUCTIONS

Step 1: In a medium to large skillet coated with cooking spray cook the beef on medium till almost cooked through but still a little pink (about 7-10 minutes). Break beef up as it cooks. **Step 2:** Stir in Worcestershire sauce, ketchup, grated parmesan, onion powder, garlic powder, salt, and pepper to the beef. **Step 3:** Continue cooking until beef is cooked all the way through. **Step 4:** In the center of the wrap place a slice of cheese and 1/3 cup of the beef mixture. Add tomato and lettuce. Then if you're using, and I highly recommend you do, add some ketchup, mustard, and a little mayo. Roll up and enjoy. If you're using a grill pan then heat it on medium high. Once it is hot, roll the wrap and place the seam side down on grill. Once there are grill marks turn over. Grill for another 2-3 minutes then remove. Repeat with the rest of the wraps. **Meal prep instructions:** Make the seasoned beef ahead of time and store in a glass or plastic container and refrigerate. When you're ready to eat, warm up the beef and then continue with the recipe. You can also store all the components separately using small freezer bags. Then put those bags into one large freezer bag to create a freezer kit.



MEAL PREP RECIPES

PIZZA SOUP - 6 SERVINGS

INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb Italian chicken sausage, casings removed
 - 1 (4.5 ounce) package turkey pepperoni, chopped
 - 1 medium white onion, chopped
 - 4 garlic cloves, chopped
 - 1 lb sliced white mushrooms
 - 2 teaspoons Italian seasoning
 - 1 (32 ounce) carton chicken broth
 - 1 (14.5 ounce) can diced tomatoes
 - 1 (14.5 ounce) can tomato sauce
 - ¼ cup tomato paste
 - salt and pepper to taste
 - Shredded mozzarella
 - 3 - 6 cup glass or plastic containers
 - 2 cup containers if you're making individual portions
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PREPARATION & APPLICATION

Step 1: In a 5 or 6 qt soup pot heat 1 tablespoon of olive oil over medium heat. Place the chicken sausage in the pot and cook until almost cooked through. Break up the sausage, with a large spoon, as it cooks. **Step 2:** When the sausage is almost cooked through then add the pepperoni and cook together until the sausage is fully cooked and no longer pink. Remove from pan and place in a bowl. **Step 3:** Add another tablespoon of olive oil and cook the onion. When the onion is just about translucent add in the garlic and cook until fragrant, about 3 minutes. **Step 4:** Add in the mushrooms and cook until softened, about 5 minutes. **Step 5:** Stir the seasoning, sausage, and pepperoni into the mushrooms, onion, and garlic. **Step 6:** Stir in the chicken broth, diced tomatoes, tomato sauce, and tomato paste. **Step 7:** Bring the soup to a boil and then reduce to a simmer and cook for 45 minutes. Give the soup a taste and add salt and pepper, if needed. Serve with shredded mozzarella. **Meal prep instructions:** Cook the soup completely and let it cool. Then put it into 3-6 cup glass or meal prep containers. The type of container you use will depend on whether or not you want to portion the soup out. Heat in microwave (using a microwave safe container) or on the stovetop.

MEAL PREP RECIPES

ITALIAN TURKEY MEATLOAF WITH ROASTED SWEET POTATOES

INGREDIENTS

- 1 slice wheat bread
 - 2-3 tablespoons 1% milk (dairy or non)
 - 1 lb ground turkey
 - ½ lb pound turkey Italian sausage links, casings removed
 - 2 eggs
 - ½ cup unseasoned breadcrumbs
 - ¼ cup grated parmesan/romano cheese
 - 2 teaspoons Italian Seasoning
 - 2 teaspoons onion powder
 - 1.5 teaspoons granulated garlic
 - ¼ teaspoon salt
 - ¼ teaspoon pepper
 - 1 cup shredded mozzarella and provolone cheese, divided
 - 2 cups marinara sauce, divided
 - Rectangle 3-6 cup glass or plastic meal prep containers.
 - 2 - 3lbs sweet potatoes
 - Olive oil
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PREPARATION & APPLICATION

Step 1: Preheat oven to 350 degrees. **Step 2:** In a large bowl mash together the bread and milk until it forms a paste. **Step 3:** Add in the ground turkey, Italian sausage, eggs, breadcrumbs, grated parmesan/romano cheese, Italian seasoning, onion powder, granulated garlic, salt, pepper, ½ cup of the shredded cheese, and 1 cup of the marinara sauce. **Step 4:** Using your hands, mix all of the ingredients, until everything is evenly distributed. **Step 5:** Spray a 7 x 11 or 9 x 11 baking dish with cooking spray. Place the meat mixture into the dish and form into a loaf. Spread the remaining marinara sauce over the meatloaf. **Step 6:** Bake for 75 minutes. **Step 7:** Set oven to broil. Sprinkle the rest of the shredded cheese over top and broil for 2-3 minutes or until the cheese is melted. **Step 8:** Remove meatloaf from the oven, let it sit for about 5 minutes, and then serve. **Meal prep instructions:** You can either prepare the loaf on the pan you'll be using to cook it or a plate. Cover with plastic wrap. Refrigerator for up to 2 days and continue with cooking instructions when ready to cook. Or you can cook completely and after it cools slightly cut into portions and then put into containers and refrigerate.

Roasted sweet potatoes. Peel and cut potatoes into wedges. Mix with 1 tablespoon of olive oil, salt, pepper and then roast for 40-45 minutes in a 350 degree oven. **Meal prep instructions:** You can make these ahead of time and store in the refrigerator. Warm up in the microwave for 2-3 minutes or in the oven for 10 -15 minutes.

MEAL PREP RECIPES

SLOW COOKER SAUSAGE & PEPPERS HOAGIES - 6 SERVINGS

INGREDIENTS

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
 - 6 links Italian poultry sausage, cut links in half
 - 1 (24-ounce) jar Marinara sauce
 - 6 bells peppers, seeds and membrane removed, sliced
 - 1 medium white onion, sliced
 - 6 slices provolone cheese and 6 hoagie rolls for the night you'll eat
 - 3-6 cup glass or plastic containers
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PREPARATION & APPLICATION

Step 1: In a large skillet heat the olive oil over medium heat until hot. Add the Italian sausage and cook on each side for 3-4 minutes or until browned and almost cooked through. **Step 2:** Add the sausages to the slow cooker. **Step 3:** Pour the sauce over top and then add the peppers and onions. **Step 4:** Place the lid on and set the slow cooker to cook for 8 hours on low. To make hoagies place 2 sausages on a hoagie. The put some peppers and onions over top. **Meal prep instructions:** First, you can prep all the ingredients in the slow cooker insert 1-2 days beforehand. Store the insert in the refrigerator. On the day you plan to eat the hoagies put the insert back in the slow cooker and continue with recipe. Second, you can completely cook this ahead of time and keep the sausage and peppers, store in containers, and refrigerate. Heat up on the stove or in the microwave when ready to serve. Top the hoagies with a slice of provolone cheese and cook under the broil for 2-3 minutes or until the cheese is melted.



Grocery List

PRODUCE

- 2 roma tomatoes
- 1 quart grape tomatoes
- 2 large cucumbers
- 1/2 red onion
- 3 medium white onion
- 4 garlic cloves
- 2-3 lbs sweet potatoes
- 1 lb sliced white mushrooms
- 6 bell peppers (all colors)
- Romaine lettuce
- 5 cups super greens (I get a large containers and split that between all the salads)
- 1 lime

MEATS

- 1lb ground beef
- 1lb ground turkey
- 3lbs (13 links) fresh Italian turkey or chicken sausage
- 1 (4.5 ounce) package turkey pepperoni
- 2 lbs boneless skinless chicken breast

DAIRY

- 1/4 cup + 1 tbsp grated parmesan
- 5 slices American cheese
- 4 cup packages of shredded mozzarella
- 6 slices provolone cheese
- 3 tbsp milk (dairy or unsweetened non-dairy)
- 2 eggs
- 2 tbsp butter or coconut oil
- 2 cups unsweetened coconut nut or almond milk (can use dairy)
- 10 tbsp crumbled feta cheese
- 5 eggs
- 1 cup taco cheese

DRY GOODS

- Worcestershire sauce
- Ketchup
- Mustard
- Mayonnaise
- 5 medium wraps
- 6 hoagie rolls
- 1 slice wheat bread
- 1 (32-ounce container) chicken broth
- 1 (14.5 ounce) canned tomato sauce
- 1 (14.5 ounce) canned diced tomatoes
- 1/4 cup tomato paste
- 1 (24-ounce) jar + 2 cups marinara sauce
- 1/2 cup seasoned breadcrumbs
- 2 cups steel cut oats
- Bottle of olive oil & vinegar dressing (I like Newmans own)
- 1 (15-ounce container) chickpeas
- 1 cup dry quinoa (this will make enough cooked quinoa for salads)
- 1 (15.5 ounce) jar of salsa
- 8 tortillas
- Hot sauce or taco sauce

PANTRY ITEMS

- Onion powder
- Garlic powder
- Italian seasoning
- salt and pepper
- Olive oil
- Pure vanilla extract

How to Prepare Your Meals on Meal Prep Day

Based on the recipes I've provided this is how I recommend setting up your meal prep day.

Step 1: Start with putting the ingredients for the salsa chicken into the slow cooker. Set the slow cooker and then move on to the steel cut oats.

Step 2: Start the steel cut oats and then in another pot start the pizza soup. While the oats and soup are cooking start the seasoned beef for the cheeseburger wraps. At the point, you'll have 3 burners going. The oats take about 30 - 40 minutes to cook. They will thicken as they sit.

Step 3: After the ground beef is cooked, let it cool for a few minutes, and then put it into a glass meal prep container and place into the refrigerator. Clean out the pan because you're going to use it to brown the sausages for the slow cooker sausage and peppers. The oats should be very close to being done. Once they have thickened, place into a glass meal prep container and let them cool for about 5 minutes or so before putting them into the refrigerator. You can store the oats in a large container or portion out into 4-5 containers. Keep an eye on the pizza soup. Give it a couple stirs every now and then.

Step 4: Clean the pot used for the steel cut oats. Make the hard-boiled eggs for the mason jar salads. When the eggs are done set them aside and use the same pot for the quinoa. Soak the quinoa in water for a couple of minutes and then rinse using a mesh strainer. Note: You can do this step while the eggs are cooking. Start cooking the quinoa for the salads.

Step 5: Remove the pizza soup from heat and let it cool slightly. After it's cooled place into 1-2 containers and refrigerate. This recipe can also be frozen if there are leftovers or you want to save some for a future lunch or dinner.

Step 6: While the quinoa is cooking prepare the meatloaf. If you plan on cooking the meatloaf for a quick heat and eat dinner during the week then set the oven to 350 degrees. If you plan to cook the meatloaf during the week, then prepare the loaf and put it into the refrigerator for up to 2 days. Place foil or plastic wrap over top of the meatloaf. If you're not going to cook it until later in the week then freeze it. Put it on a plate or small pan and flash freeze until solid. Then wrap in plastic wrap and foil. Place in the refrigerator 1-2 days prior to cooking and then continue with cooking instructions. You might need to add more cooking time if still frozen.

How to Prepare Your Meals on Meal Prep Day Cont..

Step 7: Brown the Italian sausage to prepare into a slow cooker sausage and peppers kit you'll use later in the week. Put the kit together and place into the refrigerator. Another way to do this is to cook the slow cooker salsa chicken the day before. This way you have the slow cooker insert available. Then put the slow cooker sausage and peppers ingredients together in the insert. Refrigerate the insert for 2-3 days. Put the insert in the slow cooker the morning you're gonna make this and continue with cooking instructions.

All the meats are done and dinners are ready!

Step 8: At this point quinoa should be ready. Place the quinoa aside and let it cool for 5 minutes or so. Before you jump into the salads you can prepare the sweet potatoes for dinner during the week. Just peel and cut into chunks then mix with olive oil, salt, and pepper. Then place into a container and put into the refrigerator. When you're ready to cook, continue with the recipe. You can also cook the sweet potatoes ahead of time and warm up the night you're going to eat them. I recommend making these ahead of time because it's easier to heat and eat than to cook them the day you make the meatloaf.

Step 9: Last but not least, let's get the mason jar salads ready. Layer all the ingredients into the mason jars and then store in the fridge.

Step 10: The salsa chicken may or may not be done at this time. If it still has time to cook then use that time to clean the kitchen. After the chicken is done, shred the chicken, let it cool slightly, and then store in the fridge. Cook the quesadillas the night you plan to eat them for dinner.

Step 11: Clean the slow cooker and anything else that needs to be cleaned up. You're done!

Step 12: Look inside the fridge and feel accomplished! Food is ready for the week and now you can relax!



Thank you!

I hope you found this guide helpful.

Like I said in the beginning, meal prep was a total game changer for me. I know it can be for you to!

The best advice I can give is to just start. Don't aim for perfection right out of the gate, just start. Do a little at a time and you'll be a meal prep pro before you know it!

Let's stay in touch!

You can find me on [Instagram](#) or join our [Facebook group](#). Don't forget to tag me @organizeyourselfskinny whenever you make an OYS recipe!

