

12 Weeks

TO HEALTHY EATING

WEEK SEVEN – BREAKFAST OF CHAMPIONS & SNACK ATTACKS!

You have probably heard sometime in your life that breakfast is the most important meal of the day. Breakfast is indeed the most important meal of the day, and selecting healthy options is a must. Your mind and body have fasted for several hours overnight and, when you wake up, you expect your mind and body to accomplish a lot! Would you ever expect your car to work properly in the morning with an empty gas tank? Well, if you do not consume a nutritious breakfast, what you are asking your sports car (your body) to do.

You've heard, and probably used, the excuses— "I don't have time," "I don't feel like eating in the morning," "When I eat breakfast I get hungrier during the day," "I like to have my coffee first" or whatever the reason might be as to why you don't consume breakfast — but you may want to reconsider fuelling your body when you wake up. Fuelling your mind and body with the proper breakfast will allow you to function at maximum capacity and work more efficiently throughout the day. As mentioned above, you wouldn't get in a car with an empty gas tank and expect the car to work properly. You also wouldn't put the wrong kind of fuel in your luxury car and expect the car to function at maximum capacity day in and day out. Here are some hints to help you understand why breakfast is so important. You will also learn how to structure your "Breakfast of Champions."

Learning:

- Tips to save time and eat healthy: dinner and lunch
- Why breakfast is the most important meal
- Breakfast of champions
- Timing
- Sample ideas
- On the go

Why Breakfast?

1. Fuel the brain

Your brain uses glucose as its sole energy source. Glucose is the breakdown product of carbohydrates, or glucose can be formed in a longer process that breaks down body protein. When you wake up, your energy stores are depleted. To utilize your brain at the maximum level, stock up your energy by consuming breakfast.

2. Get ready to be active

Your muscles, along with your brain, need glucose to function. If you intend on being active during the day, which may include walking to and from work, walking at your lunch hour, running errands at night or even going to the gym, you should start your day with some healthy carbohydrates.

3. Breakfast starts the metabolism engine

You can jump start your metabolism by eating breakfast within the first 30–60 minutes after waking up. Some people indicate not feeling hungry in the morning and continuing to not feel hungry until mid-day. However, if you skip breakfast, you are forcing your body to remain in a low metabolic state. On the other hand, if you eat breakfast, you will jump start your metabolism and may actually be hungrier throughout the day. This is due to your body is functioning at a higher metabolic rate!

4. Skipping breakfast may actually lead to weight gain

Denying your mind and body of the nutrients they need in the morning can actually lead to overeating later in the day or at night. Some individuals on a diet feel the increased hunger associated with eating breakfast is contradictory to a weight loss diet. However, these individuals who do not eat very much during the morning hours will make up for it by eating significantly more at dinner and after dinner. Late night eating and overeating at night can lead to weight gain, as this is not a time when most people are active and the energy gets stored as fat in the body. Consuming a healthy breakfast may actually help you to maintain control of your appetite throughout the day and make healthy choices. Breakfast eaters are also more likely to consume less fat throughout the day and thus fewer calories compared to those who skip breakfast. Skipped meals or snacks often lead to overeating at the next meal or snack; so stay in control of your weight by eating a healthy breakfast.

5. Breakfast is an important time to meet your nutrient recommendations

Breakfast is essential to help you meet your fibre, calcium, vitamin C & iron needs, along with the recommended intake of riboflavin, thiamin, folate and more! Skipping meals leads to inadequate intake of essential nutrients. Breakfast usually contains calcium and fibre-rich foods, including dairy and whole grains, which help you meet your needs.

6. Breakfast is another great opportunity to eat your fruits and vegetables

Without breakfast, consuming seven to 10 servings of fruits and vegetables may prove to be difficult. Stock up on fresh fruits, such as oranges, bananas or strawberries, or include some sautéed vegetables in your omelette.

7. Breakfast is linked with better learning abilities for children

Research indicates children who regularly eat breakfast perform better in school. Concentration and learning abilities are reduced in children who skip breakfast and therefore experience hunger pangs. Children who eat breakfast also behave better in school. Although adults may be able to block the symptoms associated with skipping breakfast, if missed on a regular basis, adults may not perform to their maximum abilities either.

8. Increase your energy levels in the morning by eating breakfast

Start your day off right by topping up your blood glucose and replacing your glycogen stores. Selecting the right foods for breakfast and provide long-lasting, sustained energy! Read below to structure your "Breakfast of Champions."

9. Improve or maintain your health with a nutritious breakfast

Research indicates individuals who eat breakfast on a regular basis may improve their health and reduce heart disease risk. Healthy, whole grain breakfast options, selected frequently by habitual breakfast eaters, tend to be lower in fat, saturated fat and cholesterol, and higher in fibre.

10. Make it a habit

The body likes consistency. If you are not used to eating breakfast in the morning, you may not be hungry when you wake up. If you eat breakfast consistently for 21 days at the same time every morning, you will not be able to go without. Start slow and small, and stick with for at least 21 days to create a long-lasting, healthy behaviour!

Structure your "Breakfast of Champions"

- Plan ahead

You must know what your options are before you go to bed! Waiting until the morning to determine what's for breakfast may not be the best option. Set yourself up for success by choosing, preparing and portioning out your healthy breakfast ahead of time. The night before, boil and shell hard-boiled eggs; portion out yogurt, walnuts and blueberries into an individual container; portion out breakfast cereal and milk into two separate containers to take with you or eat before you go; cut up fruit to have on top of cereal or even cut up vegetables to throw into an omelette for nutritious, quick and easy breakfast options!

- Eat within the first 30–60 minutes of waking up, 90 minutes at the most

The longer you wait without eating in the morning, the hungrier you are going to get and the longer your metabolism will be working at a reduced pace. Train your body to be hungry for breakfast when you wake up in the morning. Your body and mind should want and expect a healthy breakfast stocked full of vitamins and minerals for optimal performance!

- Include at least three food groups

Variety will help you meet your macronutrient and micronutrient needs and provide you with great tasting meals! Combining food groups will help you to achieve a sustained release of energy, delay hunger and maintain blood sugar for several hours. Combine food groups to include healthy lean protein, whole grains packed full of fibre, fruits and vegetables.

- Lean protein

Protein may be more satiating than carbohydrates or fat, meaning protein may help you feel fuller for longer. Adding a small amount of healthy protein to every meal and snack may help to delay hunger and contribute to the maintenance of a healthy weight. Keep in mind that the primary role of protein is to repair and rebuild muscles and tissues. Consuming a surplus of calories, including more protein than the body needs, will lead to weight gain. Lean protein may come in the form of meat, meat alternatives or fat-free or low-fat dairy or milk alternatives.

- Whole grains

Whole grains are an important part of a healthy diet to provide slow-digesting carbohydrates for sustained energy. Whole grains provide a significant amount of fibre, which may also increase satiety in meals and snacks. Selecting whole grains, as opposed to refined grains, will ensure you are providing your body with essential vitamins and minerals, which are tied closely to the fibre.

- Fruits and vegetables

Consuming the daily recommended amount of fruits and vegetables can prove to be difficult without breakfast. Fruits and vegetables are not only the most nutrient-dense foods with the least amount of energy, they are also packed full of fibre to help stabilize your blood sugar and provide a sustained energy level throughout the morning.

Breakfast ideas on the go

Not hungry or don't have time in the morning? Start small; a little breakfast is better than no breakfast. Don't have time in the morning? Prepare breakfast the night before or have easy to grab options ready to go in the morning. Make steel cut oatmeal in the slow cooker overnight, make French toast the night before and heat in the morning or wash and cut fruit and vegetables ahead of time. Here are some nutritious breakfast ideas to get you started:

Food group	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Whole grains	Oatmeal	Whole grain toast	Home-made granola	Whole grain cereal	French toast (whole grain bread)
Lean protein (meat/meat alternative or dairy)	Milk or soy milk	Almond butter	Greek yogurt	Milk or soy milk	2 eggs + egg whites to make French toast
Fruits or Vegetables	Blueberries	Banana	Strawberries	Apple	Grapes

Other quick and easy grab-and-go options:

- Whole grain waffles, hard boiled eggs and an orange
- Smoothie with milk or yogurt, oatmeal and frozen mixed berries
- Whole grain muffin with yogurt and kiwi
- Breakfast burrito with leftover rice, beans and sautéed vegetables
- Sandwich with whole grain bread, peanut butter and banana
- Protein shake with frozen raspberries and a small cup of oatmeal

More time for breakfast:

- Omelette with eggs and egg whites, mushrooms, peppers and onions and breakfast potatoes
- Whole grain pancakes made with eggs and topped with strawberry sauce
- Whole grain waffles made with eggs and topped with fresh banana and blueberries
- Frittata with asparagus and spinach and whole grain toast

Snack attack

Contrary to popular belief, snacking may actually be beneficial to your health. Have you ever gone from eating lunch at noon and until dinner at 6:30 pm with nothing in between? How do you feel? What happens when you finally get to eat dinner? Do you find yourself snacking during the preparation of dinner or overeating when dinner is served? What might happen if you add a small, healthy snack in the middle of the afternoon? Snacks may actually help you to maintain control of your appetite, promote a stable energy level and blood sugar and may actually prevent you from overeating at your next meal. Choose healthy options that will help you meet your daily recommendations and select proper portion sizes that will fit within your daily healthy eating plan. Snacks are meant to fill the hunger gap in between meals and are not meant to replace meals. Try spreading your food intake during the day into four to six mini-meals throughout the day. Remember, snacks should consist of two food groups in small portion sizes. Snacks should contain a small amount of protein to promote satiety and also contain fibre to help you meet your daily recommendations. Here are some examples to get you started.

- Hummus and carrots, celery and cucumber
- Apple with 8–10 almonds
- 10–15 grapes with 8–10 walnuts
- Yogurt with berries
- Half a turkey sandwich with lettuce and tomato on whole grain bread
- Greek salad with cucumber, tomato, peppers and olives
- Smoothie with fruit and yogurt
- Small cup of vegetable chili
- Raw veggies dipped in low-fat cottage cheese
- Flaked tuna fish on whole grain crackers
- Slice of mozzarella cheese with an apple

The ideas are endless! Snacks should be thought of as mini-meals and contain the same types of food as meals.

Self-evaluation exercises

Goal setting: Set SMART goals to work on for the next week

A key point to any successful plan is to complete and review your goals on an ongoing basis. Complete the following goals sheet. Putting pen to paper on what you want and need, your obstacles, challenges and back- up plan is key to long-term positive change.

1. What are five new breakfast ideas you might want to try? Select at least two to try this week.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

What is one goal you would like to set for yourself this week in terms of breakfast intake?

What will you do?

When will you start?

Why will you do this?

Where will you do this?

2. What are five new snack ideas you might want to incorporate? Select at least two to try this week.

What will you do?

When will you start?

Why will you do this?

Where will you do this?

Note: Grocery shopping: re-write your grocery list for the week and include any new breakfast or snack items you might want to incorporate. What additional preparation might you need to do to create these new options? Do this prep work right when you get home from the grocery store or the night before!