

Easy, quick and healthy meal and snack ideas

Sticking to our healthy eating goals can be difficult especially when we are short on time. Relying on takeaways, convenience foods and ready meals however is far from healthy and, research shows can significantly increase our risk of physical and mental ill health ^(1,2,3). Even items that have health claims on the packaging such as 'high fibre', 'low fat' or 'no added sugar' contain additives which have no functional role in the body and may detrimentally impact health ^(4,5,6).

When we are busy, giving our body the best chance to feel and perform at its best is important. The foods you choose to eat provide the building blocks for every single cell, hormone and chemical messenger you need, so choosing to consume a natural, wholefoods, nutrient dense diet is essential to ensuring a constant supply of the highest quality materials ^(7,8,9). Just a little planning can help ensure you are prepared with healthy, nutritious foods when you need them, helping you feel your best mentally and physically for as long as possible.

Snacks and 'grab-and-go' small meals.

Have a range of these in your cupboards, fridge or work bag, every day, so you always have something healthy to hand.

- **Hardboiled eggs** – boil up a whole box at once and keep them in the fridge
- **Full fat yogurt** – transfer from a big tub into smaller containers, add nuts, seeds, honey etc..
- **Mixed nuts**
- **Oat cakes/brown rice cakes/Ryvita**
- **Cheese slices/spread** – enjoy with the above
- **Good quality peanut or other nut butter** - spread on oat cakes, apple or wholegrain bread
- **Homemade Flapjack** e.g. <http://www.jamieoliver.com/recipes/uncategorised-recipes/ultimate-flapjacks/>
- **Fruit** - cut into small chunks for quick bites as needed
- **Bircher museli/Overnight oats** e.g. <http://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/1755652/apple-and-blueberry-bircher>
- **Raw veg sticks** e.g carrots, peppers, sugarsnap peas, cucumber and celery
- **Humus, guacamole or tzatziki** – dip crackers and veg sticks into these
- **Chicken drumsticks/thighs or other cooked meats of your choice**
- **Dinner leftovers** (intentionally make too much dinner so you always have some spare!)
- **Easy access tuna tins** e.g John West infusions
- **Dressed mixed bean salad** – keep old jars or dip pots and use these to portion up larger batches and keep in the fridge e.g. https://www.bbc.co.uk/food/recipes/mixed_bean_salad_89055
- **High protein wrap or sandwich**
- **Dark Chocolate**

If you are really time pressured and rarely get to stop or sit down to eat then making a batch of healthy, protein rich smoothie and splitting up into daily portion to have with you is a great way to ensure you are still consuming high quality nutrition but in small manageable doses. Eating large volumes when under stress, especially if you can't stop to eat, can result in digestive issues like reflux or bloating ^{10,11,12}.

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Smoothie recipes:

1. For sustained energy:

Blend:

- Half a banana
- Handful of whole oats
- Tablespoon (ish) of organic natural/Greek yogurt
- Water or your choice of milk to gain the consistency you want

Add to the above any combination of the following:

- Mixed berries (fresh or frozen)
- Raw/organic cocoa powder
- Nut butter (almond/peanut/cashew)
- Honey

2. For a nutrient boost

Blend:

- Half an avocado
- Juice of half a lime
- Handful of lettuce/spinach/kale
- Half an apple
- Large pinch of parsley or mint
- Sprinkle of ground nuts/seeds e.g. flax seeds
- Water (to make it the consistency you want)

More smoothie ideas can be found here:

<https://simplegreensmoothies.com/recipes/beginners-luck-green-smoothie>

<https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/collection/smoothie>

<http://greatist.com/eat/high-protein-smoothie-recipes>

Finally, when it comes to health, the 'all-or-nothing' approach does not apply. Small, simple changes are important for long-term healthy habit formation so, no matter what you have eaten today, there is still time to redeem things, help protect your health and wellbeing and reduce the temptation to continue eating unhealthily^(13,14). These quick, simple and healthy recipe ideas will help make sure you end the day well.

<https://www.wellplated.com/>

<https://www.jamieoliver.com/recipes/category/healthy-recipes/>

<https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/collection/easy-healthy>

<https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/collection/whole-foods-recipes>

<https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/collection/7-day>

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