



Eating Well at Work: Lunch

Eating well at work can be a challenge, but with a little thought and planning, you can increase your energy and well-being with healthier choices throughout the day

Tasty Tips for Smarter Lunches at Work

1. **Get the equipment.**

The surest way to eat well at work is to bring your own healthy food. You will need the equipment on hand to make it easy and safe: small ice packs, insulated lunch bags or totes, small plastic bags or sealable containers, and utensils to travel.

2. **Go to the grocery store.**

To eat healthfully at work, you must have healthful foods on hand to make lunches or take for better snacks. Buy at least 5 pieces of fresh fruit, single serving or 100-calorie pack crackers or cookies, nuts, dried fruit, and low-fat string cheese for snacks. Get set to make sandwiches with 100% whole grain bread, 95% fat-free lunch meat, reduced fat cheese, and lettuce, tomatoes, bell peppers, cucumbers, and sprouts for healthy add-ons.

3. **Pack food and beverages for the week ahead.**

Spend an hour getting organized on Sunday and save time and money all week long. Wash fruit, bag vegetables, package crackers and nuts in one-ounce servings, and fill water bottles for the week ahead.

4. **Pack lunch while you cook dinner.**

You can cook once and eat twice by making "planned-overs" at dinnertime. Make an extra serving or two and pack them to-go as you clean up the evening meal.

5. **Take advantage of convenience.**

Supermarkets feature an amazing array of single-serve healthy options—perfect for desktop dining. Go for cereal in a cup, tuna in a pouch, or fruit in pop-top cans.

6. **Let someone else cook.**

Fresh and canned soups, stews, and chili (watch the sodium) and lower calorie frozen meals can be quick and healthy choices, too. Try the prepared vegetable salads from Trader Joes (they come with dressing and a fork) or the prepared sushi. Read the label and look for meals with no more than 350-500 calories, less than 10-15 grams of fat, and no more than 800 mgs. of sodium.

7. **Add nutrition to your commute.**

It's easy, it's tasty and it doesn't have to be messy! Pack a piece of string cheese, low-fat crackers, and an apple or a bag of grape tomatoes for the car or bus.

8. **Pay attention to protein.**

Add some protein to your meals (meat, dairy, eggs, or nuts) to provide more nutrients and longer staying power for your appetite.

9. **Drink to your health.**

Staying well hydrated helps you think more clearly, be less cranky, and cuts down on mindless munching. Cool, fresh water is the best thirst quencher.

10. **Treat yourself WELL.**

When it's time to eat, give yourself a real break. Stop working, stop rushing, and give yourself a few minutes to really savor whatever you are eating.

HATE MAKING LUNCH?

"Lunchpool" with three health-conscious colleagues. "Lunchpooling" is like carpooling, but for meal preparation: Band together with a few friends who are tired of the hassle of bringing their lunch every day, and assign each person a day of the week. On their assigned days, "lunchpool" club members will prepare a healthy meal that will feed all four people in the club. It's less cooking for everyone involved and a fun opportunity to try some new dishes you might want to rotate into your own menu.

Organize a weekly "soup club" with your coworkers. Everyone likes soup, and most people have a favorite soup recipe at home. Once a week, have everyone who signs up for the club bring enough soup for all. Just be sure to set these ground rules: no cream, no coconut milk, and not too much salt. The cook should also bring in enough copies of the recipe for everyone.

Highlight healthy options on your favorite takeout menus. It happens all the time -- someone comes around with a takeout menu and invites you to order. And of course the menu is full of choices that would blow your entire fat, calories, and salt allotment for the rest of the day. No problem -- that's precisely why you've done your homework and identified two or three dishes that won't sabotage your eating plan. Ask for one of those dishes and you won't even have to look temptation in the face.

Choose from restaurants that publish their nutrition information on the web, for example Boston Market, Rubios, Baja Fresh, Sharky's Mexican Grill, Tacone, Panda Express, and most other fast food places. Restaurant's like Applebee's, Chili's, Red Lobster and Olive Garden print nutrition information right on their light menus. Or, find information for your favorite menu items on-line at dietfacts.com or nutritiondata.com.