



Meal Prep

Hello and welcome to episode #10 from our Women Going Beyond Wealth series, educating women on financial topics and providing encouragement to live intentionally and joyfully. I am Kelley Manning, financial advisor with Beyond Wealth Advisors and I am so glad you have joined me. Our topic today is *Meal planning: Good for your budget and for your busy lifestyle!* This also fits right in with our focus of Time Well Spent!

Rising inflation has impacted nearly every area of the economy. For example, have you noticed how much food prices have surged lately? According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, food prices have increased 6.1% percent from November 2020 through November 2021 and restaurant menu prices for that same period have increased significantly as well.

So how do we beat inflation at the check-out counter? One suggestion is to establish and stick to a realistic household grocery budget. This will help you purchase what you need and avoid purchasing impulse items. But if you're like me, sometimes a girl just needs that pack of Orbit gum or a bag of Skinny Pop popcorn. Other ideas for cutting grocery costs are to online shop and use a delivery service. This way you'll avoid stepping into the store where temptations abound. You can also watch for sale prices and make bulk purchases. And you can calculate unit price of items to ensure you're getting the best per unit product price.

Let me tell you about my Grandmother, the ultimate meal planner & grocery shopper. She would create her weekly menu based on the grocery ads that came out every Wednesday. She would gather her coupons and grocery shop based on the sales ads, sometimes driving to 2 or 3 different grocery stores to save money. I am not that organized, nor do I take the time to clip coupons. Sometimes, I may drive to a 2nd grocery store but that's only because the 1st didn't have something on my list. Do you need to become more organized in your menu planning and shopping? I know that I do!

But today's focus is on another trend - Meal Planning or Meal Prepping. Meal prepping is an organized way to prepare your meals ahead of time, so that you won't have to worry about cooking every single day. Not only are home-prepared meals more cost effective, they are usually healthier and can help you focus on maintaining reduced portion sizes and nutrition goals. Other benefits of meal prepping include less wasted food, and of course saving time. And who doesn't need more of that?!

So where do you start?

First, set a realistic grocery **budget** and stick to it! The USDA produces a monthly report showing household spending averages. As of May 2021, the average family of 4 with two parents/two young kids spent between \$766-\$945 a month on a low- to moderate-cost food plan. I have 2 teenage boys that seem to eat non-stop. I know about grocery bills and likely you do too! But, let's face it, with rising inflation, those grocery bills are rising.

Next, **write out meals** and needed ingredients for the following week. Consider a limited menu with recipes you already know to ease your transition into meal planning. Try to incorporate a healthy mix of lean proteins, complex carbohydrates, healthy fats, fruits and vegetables into your family's diet.

Then it's time to **shop**. Is that your favorite or worst part? For me, it's in between. Some days, it is an adventure and I look forward to it. Other times it is a chore and I often enlist the help of my husband.

Now for the fun part (for some of us!). Prepare and cook the meals!

A few easy and/or favorites include:

Grilled chicken and veggies, roasted cilantro lime chicken, one pan baked chicken and veggies, chili, grilled burgers, penne pasta/chicken, shredded chicken or pork with rice, oatmeal in a jar, bacon/spinach quiche, and egg muffins with sausage and veggies.

When prepping food, consider cutting corners. How?

- Select a day/time to batch prepare meals in advance.
- Chop then store fruits and veggies .
- Use a crockpot or instant pot to cook while also using your oven, grill or stovetop to cook other meals simultaneously.
- Portion your meals so they're easy to grab-and-go.
- Freeze some meals ahead for those days when time eludes you!
- Use those handy meal prep storage containers with dividers that seem to be everywhere now. Portion out your meals so they are easy to grab-and-go in the mornings.

So does meal prepping really save you time? Imagine not adding cooking to your daily tasks. It should free up time you otherwise wouldn't have. More time to run errands, exercise, go to the kid's games or head straight home to eat rather than the added time and expense of eating in a restaurant or going through a fast food drive-thru

Here's another big plus. . After you've prepped your meals for the coming week you just have to keep with the dishes you use to reheat your food rather than spend time washing, drying, and putting everything away. That alone is reason enough!

Is it for you? Is it time well spent? Take the time to find out!

Speaking of time, thank you for spending time with me today. I realize how valuable your time is and appreciate you spending it with me. If you enjoyed this podcast, please tell your friends! Also, let me know what ideas you might have for future podcasts. Speaking of future podcasts, please be sure to join us on our next one. We will be talking all things college – from prospective student visits, wading through expenses and best savings plans.

Again, thanks for your time today. I can be reached at 816.246.8450, or you can follow me on Facebook and LinkedIn.

Narrator: Thank you for joining us. Have ideas to pass along for a future podcast? Write us at Kelley.manning@beyondwealthadvisors.com. Securities offered through Raymond James Financial Services, Inc. member FINRA/SIPC Investment Advisory Services are offered through Raymond James Financial Services Advisors, Inc. Beyond Wealth Advisors, Inc. is located at 600 SW Jefferson, Suite 208 in Lee's Summit Mo., phone number (816) 246- 8450. Beyond Wealth Advisors, Inc. is not a registered broker/dealer and is independent of Raymond James Financial Services. Any opinions are those of Beyond Wealth Advisors, Inc. and not necessarily those of RJFS or Raymond James. There is no assurance any of the trends mentioned will continue or forecasts will occur. Any information is not a complete summary or statement of all available data necessary for making an investment decision and does not constitute a recommendation. Investing involves risk and you may incur a profit or loss regardless of strategy selected.

Sources

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