



The Athena Wellness Podcast  
Episode 020 – Healthy Food Prep 101  
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Welcome to the Athena Wellness podcast, the show that invites you to take a seat around the community fire and listen to stories that inspire. I'm your host, Kathy Robinson, author, coach and founder of Athena Wellness, a company that prides itself in supporting you on your journey to live more wholeheartedly.

Hello, and welcome to Episode 20. Thank you so much for joining me for this shortened Wellness Wednesday episode, a little midweek boosts to help keep your Warrior Vibe high.

More than 20 years ago, when I was in my mid 30s, I had an experience that put me on the path to wellness. In short, my youthful metabolism began to slow and I found myself adding a pound or two to my frame each year. I was also just hitting my career stride and it was becoming more sedentary, not a good combination. So I embarked on what has become a lifelong journey to healthier living. Not only did I need to learn how to eat as a 30-something and then adjust as the decades wore on, but I also needed to learn how to consistently move my body and support my spirit.

Today, I'd like to focus on the first part, learning how to support our healthy eating intentions. Food is the largest component of the health equation. And if you get it right, it



impacts so much. It's been my experience that when I wing it, I don't make the best decisions for myself. On the flip side, when I prepare healthy food for the week ahead, I can be mindful when there is an occasion and I choose to raise a glass with friends, or if it's something that I really want, enjoy an indulgence.

But how do we even begin to plan for a week's worth of meals? That's what we'll be exploring today. So sit back, take a nice long breath to ground yourself in presence and let's get started.

As you've come to learn over these last 20 episodes, I'm a fan of keeping things simple and taking small consistent steps toward wholehearted living. Same applies to food preparation. This approach that I'm about to share was born over two decades ago when I was commuting into New York City each work day. And it worked so well for me that I packed my food from that point until the end of my corporate career whenever I could. So this is definitely something you can do when you work outside of the home. And lastly, although my diet is just about all plant-based, I've added some meat, dairy and eggs suggestions if you include those in your diet.

When I plan for the week, I select one type of breakfast, a main dish or two and a few sides for the entire week. I have a bit of a mental inventory of different types of breakfasts that I like, the main dishes that I can choose from, and also the side dishes that I mix and match throughout the weeks and months so I don't repeat them too often and the combinations can remain fresh.

Here's an example of my typical approach. Breakfast is usually fruit, a smoothie or a cereal like oatmeal muesli or a homemade one. If it's fruit, I cut it up in the beginning of the week into individual containers with any toppings, such as nuts or ground flax, hemp



seeds, or coconut so it's all ready to go. The same can be done with oatmeal by cooking enough for the week. And if I'm in a smoothie mood, I will usually do it the night before or the morning of and make a double batch so there's enough for the next day.

For lunch, I had a healthy salad bar at my corporate office so I would usually use lettuce and raw veggies as a base and then maybe add something that I brought from home. These days, my lunch is usually my main meal. So for my main meals each week, I select one or two dishes, usually a soup or a one dish meal. You can choose casserole, a pasta dish or baked protein. Much like preparing breakfasts, I'll prepare enough for the week so the meals require little preparation on the weekdays. I'll also pick up a few sides, mostly veggies that I roast, steam or bake. And some dishes go well with rice and again, I'll make that all in one batch.

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I keep a few staples in the freezer as well, like sliced whole grain bread and small corn tortillas where I can make a quick meal by adding half an avocado to the toasted bread or BBQ jackfruit to the tortillas with a salad.

Finally, I always make sure I have "grab and go" snacks, mostly apples, bananas, celery, and baked sweet potatoes. When I worked in corporate, I also ate natural protein bars and shakes, I had packets of nut butter and rice cakes, and also packets of raw almonds. You might also try hard boiled eggs.

Here are some practical tips to make all of this a little easier. First of all, start small. If all of this is new to you, then get used to taking along a bar or an apple and snacking on that. That's a great way to start to learn what works for you and then you can build from there.



I'd also suggest creating a basic shopping list as a starting point. I used to have this elaborate one page list that I created and I would highlight what I needed for the week. Now things are much simpler. I just keep a list of the basics tucked in my weekly planner so I can pull that list out and get a sense of what I need before I go food shopping. It also helps to keep basic staples stocked in your pantry - things like olive oil, condiments, spices, rice, tomato sauce, beans, oatmeal, garlic, onions, things like that.

You can combine your food prep with something you love. During the Fall, I love to prepare my meals on Sunday afternoon while watching football. When it's not football season, I listen to podcasts or audiobooks. And others are always welcome to join in the fun. I love preparing food for the week side by side with loved ones.

Another suggestion is whenever you make something that can be frozen, to double the recipe, using half for the week ahead and stocking the rest in the freezer for the weeks when you can't cook.

And lastly, it always helps to have a reputable backup. There was a time when it felt like I was always on the road for work and I didn't have the time to prepare home cooked meals. I had two vendors that I really trusted, one specialized in soups the way I would make them, meaning really clean, and the other in healthy salads. It does take some research, but you can find healthy online alternatives and use them when needed.

Above all, just experiment and try different things and have fun with the process. Your processes will evolve and eventually you'll land on something that feels right for you.



Thank you so much for joining me today. I know there are many ways you can spend your time. Thank you for choosing to spend it with me. Until our paths cross again, be kind to yourself and show your Warrior Spirit some love.

If you know anyone who could benefit from today's episode, please pass it on. And many thanks for supporting the show by subscribing and leaving a review. It means a lot and it helps others find their way to our circle. If you'd like to access the show notes, have a question you'd like addressed on a future episode, or would like a transcript of this episode, visit [www.AthenaWellness.com/podcast](http://www.AthenaWellness.com/podcast).

Until next time, be well!