



Nikki Kinzer
Take Control of your ADHD

ADHD-FRIENDLY MEAL PLANNING KIT



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MEAL PLANNING

Congratulations, you've taken the first step in making life easier. Sometimes, that takes courage. For many people, they see menu planning and it's like hearing nails on a chalkboard. Meal planning is one of those ideas that sounds great and makes sense, but when it comes down to doing it, isn't so easy, especially if you have ADHD. It takes time and mental energy... and it means grocery shopping (one of my least favorite activities.)

Let's take a look at what happens when we don't meal plan:

- We lose money buying things we don't need or don't get eaten and rot in the refrigerator (I hope I am not the only one!)
- We lose time because we walk aimlessly around the grocery store, taking twice as long to get out of there than it would if we had a plan.
- We eat out more, which means more spending, more calories, and not always the best food for our bodies.
- We get stressed and anxious when the time comes and we have no idea what's for dinner.

So what makes meal planning so hard?

Part of the problem is we take meal planning too seriously. We get motivated to work on a plan and we figure out all of the details. We do great for a week and then the next week comes and you really don't want to recreate all that work over again. It took too much time, or maybe you found it boring, whatever the reason, you're back to winging it at dinnertime. When the meal planning process gets too complicated, it's a recipe for disaster, not for success.

When working with ADHD clients, this topic comes up much more often than you may think. They feel unsure because there is a strong desire for the planning to work; they just aren't sure how to do it.

I've come up with a plan to help. It takes a little time up-front, but once we nail down a master list of meals, it becomes easier and with a little practice, it can become routine. My plan is simple and it does include one night of take-out, going out to eat, and leftovers! We want to succeed and be happy, not set up unrealistic expectations.



When should meal planning happen?

We have two options; we can meal plan once a week or twice a week. It really is a matter of personal preference.

If choosing to plan once a week, pick a day where you have time to do it. I usually do my meal planning on Sunday mornings because I like to do my grocery shopping for the week on Sunday afternoons. Some prefer to do their planning on Saturdays and then do the shopping on Sunday. It really doesn't matter as long as you are consistent, that's the key. If you miss your scheduled time, it usually means a lot of take-out that week.

I have seen twice a week work really well for people, especially if meal planning is overwhelming. Breaking the week in half makes a lot of sense because we are only planning for three meals at a time rather than six or seven. For example, on Sunday, you plan for Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday meals. Wednesday is leftovers. On Thursday, you plan for Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, and knowing one of those nights will be take out, you really only have two meals to plan.

Meal Planning Basics:

- 1 Build Your Master List of Meals** - It's really hard to remember all of the meals that you like, let alone everyone in your family. Coming up with a master list of meals is extremely helpful when planning your meals. You don't have to rely on your memory; this is a huge bonus for the ADHD mind. As part of the kit, we have a master list worksheet for your dinner meals, but also one for breakfast and lunch. Most likely you won't have as many options as there are listed, but it's always nice to look at this when writing your grocery list.
- 2 Check Your Schedule** - With your master list in hand, take a look at your calendar. This is especially important if you are living in a household with really busy people. By looking at your schedule, you can predict how much time you have to prepare meals. This can make a big difference when choosing whether to make an easy or more complex recipe.
- 3 Shop Your Freezer and Pantry** - Before making any decisions, check to see what you already have. You'll save money and time.
- 4 Simple Planning** - I'm all about simplicity. Planning three to four meals at a time doesn't mean you have to make those meals on certain days. One of the complaints I often hear about meal planning is it's too rigid, what if I change my mind? Well that could happen, but I also think it's nice to know you can just move meals around if you need to.

On a side note:

I have seen more success with staying consistent when you wrap meal planning around something you already do. For example, if every Sunday morning, you enjoy a nice breakfast with your family, after the meal, do your meal planning. Or if every Monday, you go over your budget, after you're done, do your meal planning. Or maybe every Tuesday you have coffee with a friend, prior to meeting them, do your meal planning.

So before you begin to plan your meals, take some time to decide when you are going to plan them. Then you can move in to the following steps to be successful.



To give you an idea of how it works, here is an example of a standard week in my home:

One day a week, usually Tuesdays, we have tacos. One day a week, we usually have chicken. One day a week, we have breakfast for dinner. One day, we have BBQ. One day, we have pasta. That's five dinners already done. The other three can be leftovers, maybe a pizza, or I pick out something from the master list that looks good. Once I figure out the plan, I enter it on the calendar (which is part of this kit) and I place on our bulletin board, so if anyone wants to know what's for dinner, they can go check it out.

5 Grocery shop - The last step is to put together your grocery list and go shopping. As part of the kit, you will receive a grocery list. Check to see what ingredients you need to buy and don't forget to include breakfast and lunch items as well.

A note on coupons: you can certainly look at weekly coupons from your local store to see if they match up to your plan and help save money. You can try coupon match up websites and phone apps that combine available coupons with sales at major grocery store chains, like Savings Angel (www.savingsangel.com) or Retail Me Not. Or get printable coupons at Smartsources.com where all you need to do is enter your zip code to get local coupons. And make sure you sign up for loyalty cards with your retailer if they offer them as well to get immediate savings in the checkout lane.

Yes, meal planning does take some time, but it doesn't have to be hard. It can be done and the rewards are great. Start saving money, time, and energy by using my toolkit. The best part about this system is even if you miss one week, it's not the end of your planning. You can easily get back on track!

Because simplicity is key, here are a couple of other ways to keep your planning easy:

- If you don't really care much about variety, decide on ten meals and have them on rotation every two weeks. Taking into account during those two weeks, you will have two days for leftovers and two days for take out.
- Get the family involved in meal planning. Let each family member choose one meal from the list. This is a great idea especially for families who have picky eaters, plus it takes the pressure off the person always making the meal decisions.



NIKKI KINZER

As an ADHD Coach, my passion is to partner with individuals to help them build positive life habits, reduce stress, and inspire them to take back control of their lives.



Through coaching and online training, I have built a growing and evolving ecosystem of ADHD and organizing tools dedicated to helping people reach their goals. I co-host the long-running Internet broadcast, Taking Control: The ADHD Podcast, where Pete Wright and I have been taking questions and offering direct support to listeners since 2010.

I am a certified coach graduate of the ADD Coach Academy (ACCG) and a graduate of Coach U., both are International Coach Federation-accredited training programs. I have received additional ADHD Coach training through Institute for Challenging Disorganization, ADHD Coaches Organization, and MentorCoach. I have a Bachelor of Science degree in Merchandising Management from Oregon State University.

I am a Professional Certified Coach (PCC) through the International Coaching Federation (ICF), which signifies my commitment to the professional standards and ethics in the coaching industry.

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MEAL PLANNING MASTER LIST

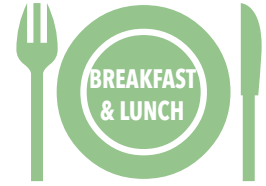


Use this form to catalog your family's favorite meals, sides, and desserts. It's much easier to plan your meals each week with a robust list of meals at hand that you know have been a hit in the past!

MAIN DISHES - DINNER	

SIDE DISHES	

MEAL PLANNING MASTER LIST



Use this form to catalog your family's favorite meals, sides, and desserts. It's much easier to plan your meals each week with a robust list of meals at hand that you know have been a hit in the past!

MAIN DISHES	
BREAKFAST	LUNCH

SIDE DISHES	

WEEKLY MENU PLANNER

BREAKFAST LUNCH DINNER

	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN
MAIN DISHES							
SIDE DISHES							
VEGGIES							
FRUIT							
DESSERTS							
NOTES							

GROCERY LIST

Week of: _____

Fresh Produce

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Deli

- _____
- _____
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- _____
- _____
- _____

Bakery

- _____
- _____
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Dairy, Eggs, & Cheese

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Meats and Seafoods

- _____
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Bread & Grains

- _____
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- _____
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Cereal / Breakfast Food

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Frozen Food

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GROCERY LIST

Week of: _____

Canned Food

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Bulk Food

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Spices

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Sauces & Condiments

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Snacks

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Drinks

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Pharmacy

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Household Goods

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Other

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