

Your Ultimate Weight-Loss Kitchen

Love To Lose
Love Your Life | Lose The Weight

Introduction

Your health — and ultimately your weight loss — starts in the kitchen.

Unfortunately, the kitchen all too often becomes a place of chaos where random things are unpacked, clutter accumulates, expired foods pile up, and little to no cooking occurs.

If this sounds familiar, your kitchen is probably preventing you from losing weight.

Your environment has a massive influence on your behaviors – so if your kitchen environment is out of control, then your eating probably is, too. Clutter and disorder creates stress, stress leads to emotional eating, and emotional eating leads to weight gain.

Also, a chaotic kitchen is in no way conducive to cooking. And if you want to eat healthy and shed pounds, there's no way around it: you have to cook. But if your kitchen isn't set up properly, you never will.

Fortunately, all it takes is a few simple steps to take charge of your kitchen and make it work for you rather than against you.

Your ultimate goal is to set up your kitchen to think for you, so you have to make as few decisions as possible.

You want to open doors and drawers and have what you need at your fingertips, you want whatever you don't need out of the way, and you want what you need to avoid out of sight.

You also want your kitchen to be clean, organized, and clutter-free. This prevents you from feeling stressed out and overwhelmed, which is critical – because when you feel this way, you're more likely to take the path of least resistance and eat whatever's in front of you.

You want to feel completely in control, be able to think clearly, and plan accordingly.

You also want to stock your kitchen with foods and equipment that make it easy to cook healthy meals . . . as often as possible.

You don't have to become a professional chef or make gourmet meals – occasionally experimenting with new foods or combining and preparing the usuals in different ways is enough. Cooking doesn't have to be elaborate or complicated – and it can actually be fun!

And last but not least, your kitchen should not just be a place of order and efficiency, but also of beauty and creation. It should be a place where people want to congregate and connect. You want to feel relaxed and happy in your kitchen so you'll be in it as much as possible, cooking healthy meals for yourself and your family.

This guide will show you how to:

- Weed out clutter so you feel less overwhelmed
- Organize your kitchen so that it makes decisions for you
- Stock your kitchen properly so that cooking healthy meals is effortless and fun
- Make your kitchen a place of beauty and enjoyment

The steps in this guide are meant to be incorporated a few at a time; don't try and do everything at once. Start with the ones that are easiest and that work best for you.

Even just making a few small changes is enough to make you feel more confident and in control. And when you feel this way, you'll be a lot more likely to achieve your weight-loss goals.

Food doesn't have to cause you anxiety or be something you use to fill a void. And if you set your kitchen up the right way, it will become what it's meant to be: something that nourishes you and that you can – finally! – enjoy.

Purge It

Having your kitchen packed to the gills with things you hardly ever (or never) use will almost guarantee that you'll be stressed and overwhelmed when you're in it. And feeling this way is a recipe for eating whatever's in front of you – and probably bingeing on it, too.

You want to feel calm and in control when you're in your kitchen. And the fastest way to do this is to eliminate clutter. The problem is, you don't notice it because you're so used to looking at it.

Do you have ten travel coffee mugs but only use the same three? Do you still have the unopened barbecue sauce your mom gave you for Christmas last year because you feel bad throwing it out? Are your shelves shoved full of platters and bowls from your wedding that you might use “one day”?

If you can relate to this, your kitchen needs a purge.

Once you get rid of what you're not using, you can insert the items that you do need – basic staples and equipment that make it easy and fun to cook healthy meals. And even if you have most of what you need, if you can't see it, you won't use it.

But most of all, once you get rid of the clutter, you'll feel more in control – which means you'll be less likely to feel out of control when you eat.

When you're purging, you want to keep the minimum of what you need, not the maximum. You want to err on the side of not having something, rather than keep too many things that lead to overwhelm. If you catch yourself saying “One day I might use that” or “I hate to get rid of that” – that's something you definitely don't need.

Besides, if you find that you really did need that cheese grater you tossed out, you can run out and get a new one – one that probably works better and gets you excited about making that new dish you wanted to try.

It can feel overwhelming to purge, so give yourself plenty of time. Take it one cabinet, one shelf at a time. Don't try and do your whole kitchen in a day.

Remember, stuff creates mental weight – and mental weight creates physical weight. So get rid of it!

Clutter creates overwhelm.

Your Goal:
Eliminate 25% of what you currently have.

Non-Food Items

1. Block off time, and take it one cabinet/shelf/drawer at a time.
2. Take everything out.
3. Sort items into
 - I use it all the time.
 - I use it some of the time.
 - I hardly ever use it.
4. Give away items you hardly ever use (platters, serving pieces, wedding gifts). If you feel that you really can't get rid of them, put them all in one out-of-the-way cabinet or move them out of the kitchen entirely. For cooking equipment, keep items you think may inspire you to cook something new and different (food processor, sushi maker, rolling pin). Anything else, get rid of it.
5. Go through items you use some of the time. For daily-use items (cups, plates, silverware), give 25% to Goodwill. Be ruthless! For everything else, determine whether it's just taking up space. If so, get rid of it.
6. Eliminate mismatched items (Tupperware, flatware, cups/glasses, plates/bowls). Set aside for Goodwill.
7. Get rid of damaged items or items that don't work well (chipped glasses, pans with loose handles, dull knives).
8. You should be left with about three-fourths of what you started with, and there should be enough space that you can see everything you have and also add what you need.



TIP:
Set a timer
so you don't
overthink it.

Food Items

1. Throw away anything expired.
2. Throw out foods in your pantry (flour, cereal, oils, chips, crackers) and in your fridge (sauces, syrup, ketchup) that have been open for a month or longer.
3. Throw out foods in your freezer that have been there longer than two months (frozen meals, popsicles, vegetables).
4. Get rid of unopened foods you likely will never use (jelly, hot sauce, spices).

Organize It

Without order, there's chaos. And when it comes to your kitchen, even the slightest bit of chaos starts the downhill slide into clutter and overwhelm.

Also, if what you need isn't where it's supposed to be, you won't use it – and you'll be reluctant to go looking for it. Instead you'll listen to the voice that says “I don't feel like cooking,” and the good intentions you had will be abandoned. If the package of pasta you need is hidden behind the boxes of (probably stale) cereal, you're not going to cook it.

Being organized also means that not only are the things you need easy to find – but also that the things you want to stay away from are safely out of sight. You want your healthy foods at eye level, organized and ready to use, and you want your less-healthy items (like your kids' snacks) stored in a harder-to-access area.

Don't forget that you want your kitchen to make decisions for you. And being organized ensures that you have to make as few as possible.

Organization is a lot easier with things like storage bins and drawer dividers. Every kitchen is different, so you'll want to have a tape measure and a notepad to write down exactly what you need and for what space. Again, don't try and do this all in one day – take it one area at a time.

Remember, when you're organized you feel in control. And when you feel in control, you won't eat out of control.

Feel calm and in control.

Your Goal:

Everything has a “home” and is placed according to desired usage.

Cabinets/Shelves/Drawers/Pantry

1. Put non-food items you're keeping – utensils, glassware, silverware, pots and pans – in the dishwasher and run it.
2. Vacuum out the cabinet, drawer, or shelf to get rid of dust or crumbs.
3. Wipe down area with a combination of hot water and vinegar.
4. Group similar items together. If you're doing one cabinet or shelf at a time, take stray items out and move them where they go – you can organize them later when you get to that area.
5. Sort items into frequently used and infrequently used.
6. Put items you use most frequently at eye level and those you use less often up higher or down lower.
7. Nest items like pots, pans, and bowls; stack cups and glasses, if possible.
8. Decide how best to organize the items for that space. Here are some ideas for what you might need:
 - Silverware/utensil dividers
 - Sealed plastic bins for opened items (flour, sugar)
 - Baskets for snack items (energy bars, chips)
 - Non-slip mats for cups and glasses
 - Plastic bins with pull-out drawers for under-sink items
9. Measure the space inside the cabinet, drawer, or shelf to determine what size items you need to buy.
10. Purchase your organizational items. (This is the fun part!)
11. Designate a drawer or cabinet for kids' snack items to keep from having to root through everything in your pantry (and to keep your kids out of your work zone!).
12. Place items you use frequently in front of other items.



TIP:
Adjust your
shelves to
reconfigure
your space.

Refrigerator

1. Remove shelves and drawers. Rinse them under hot water or wipe them down with hot water and vinegar. Really get in there!
2. Wipe down freezer with hot water and vinegar.
3. Sort foods in the fridge by section:
 - dairy, butter, and eggs
 - fruits
 - veggies
 - condiments
 - bottled water and other drinks
 - milk and juice
 - meats
4. Move dividers up or down to accommodate items.
5. Keep middle section free for future prepped items and daily meals.
6. Replace foods in freezer, stacking similar items together.
7. Get a meal magnet for your fridge to plan snacks and meals 1-2 days out.
8. Every time you take out the trash, run through your fridge to get rid of soon-to-expire items.

Stock It

Stocking your kitchen properly is essential if you're going to cook. And remember that cooking is critical if you want to be healthy and lose weight. That's because when you cook, you're taking control of food – and when you're in control of food, it can no longer control you.

If your kitchen is stocked with the right ingredients and the right equipment, then making healthy meals will be fun and easy. But if you get the urge to try a new dish and you don't have what you need, you'll feel frustrated and you won't do it.

It's important to have the basics, but don't forget that it's also fun to get ingredients or supplies that you don't use that often or never have used.

Buy a mandolin to shred some veggies for a casserole or a spiralizer to make zucchini "noodles." Get some tahini for homemade hummus or some coconut butter to put in a smoothie. Stock your kitchen with stuff that inspires you to create!

Being creative is energizing and gives you confidence – both of which are important elements of setting and achieving goals (especially a weight-loss goal!).

The first thing you want to do is replace worn-out equipment for items that work better and that make your life easier. If your can opener is rusted, get a new one. If your knives are dull, replace them (or at least have them sharpened).

It doesn't have to be expensive. You can work the range of kitchen suppliers: from Target and the Container Store to Williams Sonoma and Crate and Barrel. However, it's a good idea to spend a little extra when it comes to food staples – it pays to invest in good olive oil, for example. Flavor counts!

Don't forget that you have to have room to stock the items you need, which is why creating space was part of the kitchen purge. If you still don't have "white space" in your cabinets and drawers . . . go back to step one and continue weeding out.

Also, once you have the supplies you need, make sure you organize them properly – because if you can't find them, you won't use them.

Something to keep in mind: you want to stop buying items in bulk. Buy exactly what you need, even if it's slightly more expensive. Unless you run a cupcake factory, you're never going to use a five-pound bag of flour.

Cooking is critical.

Your Goal:

Have what you need to make two of your usual meals and one new dish per week.


Staples

- Sea salt
- Extra-virgin olive oil (first cold pressed is best)
- Flax oil and/or coconut oil
- Spices (Italian, cumin, thyme, curry, black pepper)
- Dijon mustard
- Soy sauce or tamari
- Balsamic or red wine vinegar
- Fresh garlic
- Good unsalted butter/ghee
- Chicken or vegetable stock
- Canned tomatoes/tomato paste
- Olives
- Assortment of grains (whole-wheat pasta, quinoa, whole-wheat couscous, bulgur, brown rice)
- Assortment of beans (canellini, pinto, or black beans; chickpeas)
- Nuts (pine nuts, slivered almonds, walnuts)
- Whole-wheat flour
- Optional: brown sugar or honey

Equipment

- A set of good knives
- Nonstick pots and pans – preferably dishwasher safe
- Wooden spoons
- Silicone spatula
- Whisk
- Cheese grater
- Vegetable peeler
- Can opener
- Potato masher
- Nested glass bowls with lids
- Large and small colanders
- Stainless steel strainer

- Salad spinner
- Metal tongs
- Baking dishes/Pyrex dishes
- Baking sheet
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Food processor/Cuisinart
- Mini prep/chop (salad dressing, chopping herbs)
- Large cutting board and a few smaller ones (for chopping onions/garlic separately)
- Metal scraper (for cleaning off your cutting board)
- Assortment of (matching!) Tupperware (from super small to extra large)
- Chip clips
- Cookbook holder
- Ice packs and a small cooler bag for perishable snacks to take with you



TIP:
Commit to using
1 new ingredient
each week.

Optional

- Juicer
- Bullet for making smoothies
- Mandolin for shredding veggies

Plan It/Prep It

You can have the most perfectly clean, organized, stocked kitchen, but without proper planning, it's all a wasted effort. It's like beautifully maintaining your car but driving without a map – it may look good but you won't get very far.

Planning ensures that nothing is left to chance. This is a good thing, because when things fall to chance, chances are you'll take the path of least resistance.

When you load up your fridge with food but have no menu planned, it will probably get thrown out. When you don't have healthy snacks prepped, you'll grab a bag of chips instead. When you don't keep a running grocery list, you'll end up getting take-out because you forgot to buy what you needed to make dinner.

However, when you have meals planned and prepped and snacks pre-made and ready to eat, you don't have to make decisions about what to eat. And when there's no need for making decisions, there's no need for willpower.

Also, planning requires that you're on top of what you have, what you need, and what you're going to use. So when you consistently plan that means you'll spend more time in your kitchen, which keeps things flowing and ensures you stay on top of eating healthy.

Your overall goal is to know what you're going to eat ahead of time and have it ready to go when you need it. Don't wait until you're hungry to decide what to eat.

It takes practice to become more proactive in your kitchen. Start with a few of these tactics and keep adding as you master them. Don't overwhelm yourself.


Slowly build your confidence and feel good that you're taking control!

Leave nothing to chance.

Your Goal:

Have one to two days of snacks and meals planned and prepped.

- Spend 10 minutes each night prepping your kitchen for the next day:
 - Load the dishwasher (and run it if possible)
 - Prep items for your breakfast
 - Set up your coffee/tea
 - Update your grocery list/meal planner
 - If you have kids, pack their lunches – reduce as much morning stress as possible!
- Update your fridge meal magnet and grocery list throughout the day.
- Set up items for your next meal at the end of the previous one.
- Set aside 10-15 minutes each day as nonnegotiable prep time.
- Prep all items you'll eat for the day, and place on a dedicated shelf in your fridge.
- Prep one extra snack/one cheat snack per day.
- Wash fruits and vegetables and put in fridge.
- Use the mix-and-match meals at the end of this guide to make planning healthy meals easy!



TIP:
Browse through
a cookbook each
night for meal
ideas.

Use It . . . And Enjoy It!

If you want to adopt good habits and eliminate bad ones, you have to use your kitchen to your advantage. You can easily do this by removing obstacles that prevent you from doing the right things – and by inserting obstacles that prevent you from doing the wrong ones.

If you are a chocolate lover, you don't want it sitting on the counter or at eye level in your pantry. Move it so that it takes extra effort to get to it – even just one or two seconds is enough to make you think twice. And if you want to drink more water, put it out where you can see it: on the counter, next to the stove, by the sink – everywhere! Just looking at it is a reminder of your commitment to being healthy.

And if you want to eat healthy and lose weight, you also have to make your kitchen flow. In order to do this, you have to spend time in your kitchen. And if you want to want to spend time in your kitchen, it has to be a place you enjoy.

Making your kitchen flow means you're consistently weeding out and straightening what gets moved out of place. It means regularly assessing what you need and keeping it clean and neat. And it means caring for it and making it visually appealing – a space you feel good being in.

When your kitchen flows, energy flows. This is important, because when energy in your space is blocked – when you have clutter, when foods get shoved to the back of your pantry, unseen and unused, when your space is dirty and disorganized, your mental energy is blocked.

When your mental energy doesn't flow, you feel frustrated, irritated, and stuck. And when you feel this way, you're more likely to do unhealthy things – like eat whatever's in front of you, binge eat, or never cook a meal.

Your kitchen has to be a place of flow for you to feel calm and in control around food. And when you feel this way, it's easier to make positive changes to your eating behaviors. Being in a kitchen that is set up to function properly and

efficiently helps you learn how to eat in a different way – for nourishment and enjoyment rather than to fill an emotional void.

And when you make your kitchen a beautiful space, you'll be happy in it and feel energized to create and take charge of your health.

Make your kitchen flow.

Your Goals:

Take control and enjoy yourself!

Weight Loss

- Eat half of your meal and save the rest
- Make your meal and take away 1/3 before you start and put it in the fridge for a snack
- Designate a shelf in your fridge for your daily allotment of food. Once you've eaten all items on you're the shelf . . . you're done for the day!
- At the first sign of hunger, set a timer for 10 minutes before deciding to eat
- Set a timer for 20 minutes while you eat each meal (and take the full time to finish)
- Make a healthy casserole to have for meals when you're in a hurry
- Put water in several visible spots throughout your kitchen (by the sink, on countertops, next to the stove)
- Move less-healthy items (chocolate, chips, sodas) in harder-to-reach areas or out of sight
- Place healthier items (grains, olive oil) in the middle shelves of your pantry and cabinets or on the counter

Flow

- Set up for meal prep. An hour before dinner, get everything set up so that cooking is as easy as possible:
 - Take out pots, pans, and cooking utensils and place on stove
 - Wash fruits and vegetables and place on cutting board
 - Line up dry ingredients (herbs, spices, pasta, grains) on counter
 - Put any refrigerated items on a designated shelf in the fridgeIf everything is prepped, you're less likely to say "I don't feel like it."
- Use the First In, First Out (FIFO) procedure. When you have two of the same item, put the freshest or unopened item behind the one that's open and will expire sooner. That way, you're less likely to waste anything.
- Whenever you're taking out the trash, go through the fridge and get rid of anything expired or that's unlikely to be eaten. (You already know that no one's going to eat the leftover pizza from last Thursday night, so go ahead and toss it now!)

Enjoy

- Invest in some pretty kitchen towels
- Put out fresh flowers
- Get an Alexa and play relaxing music
- Light a candle
- Use your crystal
- Buy some quality hand soap/lotion
- Set out a fragrant herb plant (rosemary, basil)
- Hang a painting, frame your kids' artwork, or put up an inspirational quote
- Keep an attractive cookbook on the counter . . . especially one that inspires you to cook something new!



TIP:
Put fruit in one
of your hardly-
ever-used
bowls and set
it out on the
counter.

Make This Guide Work For You!

Remember that if you don't use your environment proactively, it will passively sabotage you. And if you're not getting the results you want, it's highly likely that your environment isn't set up for success.

There's no environment more important than your kitchen to ensure your success at losing weight, so it's essential that you take control of it and make it work in your favor.

Even if you're not a packrat and your kitchen is basically clean, that's not enough.

You have to make sure that your kitchen is set up to make decisions for you, that it motivates you to cook healthy meals, and that's it's a room you love being in.

Taken individually, the tactics in this guide may seem basic or obvious . . . that cleaning your fridge out is a no-brainer.

It's true that they're basic. But by putting them all together simultaneously, you'll amplify your momentum and increase your results — exponentially.

Every small change you make, in and of itself, has power. But many small changes put together creates a force.

You *can* lose weight. It's completely doable. Use every tool, no matter how small, in your arsenal. Step by step, day by day, you can achieve any goal you set your mind to.

Commit to implementing the tactics in this guide. Resolve today that you're going to use your kitchen to your fullest advantage and create the healthy life you deserve to live!

Set up your kitchen for success!

MIX-AND-MATCH MEALS

Use this mix-and-match planner to create multiple combinations of healthy meals. Choose one base, one protein, and one healthy fat — and as many veggies as you want! Feel free to eat the veggies raw, steamed, or sauteed. There's no need to make healthy complicated by overthinking it.

BASE

Rice (brown, white, or wild)
Quinoa
Bulgur
Couscous
Farro
Whole-wheat pasta
Edamame

PROTEIN

Beans
Boiled egg
Chicken strips
Tofu
Tempeh

VEGETABLES

Broccoli
Tomatoes
Celery
Spinach
Wilted kale
Arugula
Asparagus
Diced cucumber
Eggplant
Shredded/diced carrots
Brussels sprouts
Diced squash/zucchini
Cauliflower

HEALTHY FAT

Low-fat cheese
Olives
Avocado
Pine nuts/almonds
Sesame seeds
Plain Greek yogurt

DRESSING

Blend any combination of . . .

Extra-virgin olive oil
Soy sauce
Dijon mustard
Garlic
Lime juice
Basil/cilantro
Sea salt