

WELLNESS WEDNESDAY

It's About Time

While there are many specific reasons we struggle to get on track with our health goals, for many people, it comes down to one simple obstacle: time (or the lack thereof)!

The strategy that will likely be effective isn't the one that centers around beating ourselves up for not hitting the mark and promising ourselves we'll be stricter, more disciplined, and more intense in the future. A more considered approach will be to evaluate what's gone wrong and come up with a plan for better navigating that difficulty in the future.

Who wants to cook for over an hour after a long, stressful day at work? Workout at 4am the next day? Almost no one, and even if the extra effort is sustainable for a few weeks, how long can we keep it up? If we really want to make long-term improvements, we have to be honest about the framework we're working in. For example, we can cook big, healthy meals on days off, but we can also plan for some easy, reasonably healthy lifesavers in crazier circumstances:

1. **Use bagged fresh or frozen vegetables** to add to a prepared meal. We'd all like to use the microwave less, but in a pinch, we can quickly add some extra vegetables to whatever else we might have "nuked" for additional nutrient support.
2. **Stock the freezer**—frozen vegetables, fruits, protein, and even whole grains can be quick and ready-to-eat after warming. A rice, chicken (or beans!), and broccoli meal can be only minutes away with very little prep. This approach helps limit the high amounts of sodium and saturated fat that are usually in conventional, pre-prepared microwavable meals.
3. **Have a plan for restaurants**—we're likely to dine out sometimes, just because it's so convenient, so get a list together of places where you know you can get a meal that's somewhat healthy. Look at menus and nutrition information online beforehand, and go in ready to order. Also, don't be afraid to request the food to be prepared differently—sometimes all you have to do is ask for the butter or cheese to be left off, for whole grain instead of white, or baked instead of fried.

Similar strategies can be used for exercise and stress management, as well. What's theoretically the best, may not be practically so—the "best" lifestyle plans for us are not only ones that will improve our health, but are also ones we can do in our lives as they are right now. We will then be in a better place to do more, when time (and everything else) allows.

<https://www.health.harvard.edu/nutrition/food-shortcuts-for-busy-nights>

© Glasbergen/ glasbergen.com



"You take 30 minutes for lunch and go home at 5:00 every afternoon. At this rate, you're going to use up all of your vacation time!"

Cartoon used with special permission from Glasbergen.com

Connect with Employee Wellness!

Brent Trammell—Employee Wellness Coordinator

785-670-1314