ZENITH FITNESS TRAINING

ZFT BATCH COOKING GUIDE

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Welcome...

...to the ZFT Batch Cooking Guide.

Below I have included the key principles that work for nutrition for health and fat loss. If anything you read, see or hear deviates from any of the six principles below, chances are you can dismiss it immediately as a short term fad diet. This is a way of eating that will enable you to achieve both fast and permanent results in a way that is 100% sustainable. You see this change has to be permanent so it has to be both straightforward and above all enjoyable.

Follow these principles and you will get results...

1. Eating fewer calories than you burn (calorie deficit)
2. Eat more vegetables and fruits because they are rich in antioxidants and micro-nutrients (vitamins and minerals)
3. Eat plenty of protein for repair and maintenance of lean tissue, and to keep you feeling full (protein satisfies the appetite more than any other macronutrient)
4. Eat enough healthy fats from oily fish, nuts, avocados, coconut and olive oils (healthy fats are an essential part of a balanced diet)
5. Drink plenty of water to naturally detoxify the body, keeping the brain and body hydrated so it can function properly (green and herbal teas count towards this water intake)
6. Limit processed foods and artificial sweeteners and preservatives

Now go and learn, cook, and experience the benefits that good nutrition has to offer – enjoy!

Batch cooking

Batch cooking is a great way to run an efficient and effective nutrition regime. The idea is that you cook all (or most of) your main meals and snacks in one or two weekly sessions rather than every day.

At first this might seem like a big undertaking, but you'll quickly reap the rewards and over time will develop new processes to speed things up.

So what are the benefits?

- You're less likely to reach for fast food, if you are too tired to cook when you get home from work, or if you're generally short on time
- You'll free up a lot of time in the week by batch cooking at the weekend - it's a more efficient use of your time
- You'll spend less time food shopping
- You'll save money... less trips to to the supermarket and lower food bills (from buying in bulk)
- There will be less washing up to do outside of your batch cooking session
- You'll feel more in control of your diet by eating healthy home cooked food.

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Before you get started, it's important to get your kitchen organised for a batch cooking session.

Here are some essential items for your kitchen...

- Baking foil
- Kitchen scales
- Resealable food bags
- Sealable containers, e.g. tupperware
- Good set of pots and pans
- Wooden spoons
- Baking trays
- Good quality set of knives
- Fridge and freezer space!

Shopping for your batch recipes

Meat, poultry and fish can often end up being amongst the pricier items on your shopping list.

Take a trip to your local butchers and buy a load of chicken breast (cheaper than the supermarket and usually better quality). It's also worth checking out any other deals on less expensive meat, such as mince, liver etc.

Your butcher may also be able to advise you on how best to use different cuts. The butcher or farm shop is also a good place to get a tray or two of free range eggs, as they are cheaper and better quality than supermarket eggs.

Useful tips in the supermarket...

- Buy sliced frozen onions and crushed garlic to save time in the kitchen
- Take extra care to check the best before dates on fresh fruit and vegetables. The items with longer expiry dates are usually at the back of the shelf
- Loose fruit and vegetables tend to be cheaper than packaged
- Frozen fruits and vegetables are just as healthy as fresh, but last longer (as long as you have enough space in your freezer!)
- Buy according to the season. 'Summer' fruits such as strawberries, will cost more in December than in July
- Own brands can often be just as tasty as big brands but cheaper
- More discounts can often be found when shopping after 7pm, or last thing on a Sunday
- Make the most of supermarket loyalty cards and vouchers
- A good selection of spices can pep up a meal in seconds
- Local markets are a great place to buy cheap fruit and vegetables, but you may need to use them up quickly

Back in the kitchen...

Firstly, it's a good idea to allow enough time for your batch cooking. The finished dishes need sufficient time to cool down before they can be stored away. Therefore starting a batch cook late in the evening isn't advisable.

Clean your kitchen surfaces and clear enough space for prepping. Empty the dishwasher and tidy the sink area so it's ready for washing fruit and vegetables - and washing up.

Ensure you have enough space in the fridge and freezer.

When you first start batch cooking, you might find it easier to cook just one or two recipes then gradually work your way up to a fridge / freezer full of food!

Another simple method is to get into the habit of making more than you need whenever you cook a meal, such as chilli con carne, curry or bolognese. You can then freeze the leftovers for another day. Before you know it, you'll have built up a good few extra meals.

Useful tips:

- Prepare ingredients for more than one recipe at a time, to speed up the batch cooking process. e.g. pick two or three recipes which use similar ingredients and prepare them at the same time. This will also save on washing up
- Once the batch cooked meals have cooled down, divide them into food containers or freezer bags. The benefit of freezer bags is that they tend to take up less space in the freezer. Store all of the meals in the freezer except for the ones you'll be eating on the first few days - these can be refrigerated. Simply defrost the frozen meals as and when you need them
- Label and date the meals

Remember:

- Frozen meat should be thoroughly defrosted before use. For packaged meat and fish, follow the pack instructions
- Never refreeze anything once it has thawed
- Allow hot food to cool thoroughly before storing in the fridge or freezer

Food prep time-saving ideas

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Vegetables

- Peel, slice and de-seed vegetables which feature regularly in your meal plan. Store them in a sealable bag or airtight container in the fridge for 3-4 days. e.g. peppers, carrots. Avoid chopping peppers too finely, as the larger surface area means they will deteriorate more quickly. It's also best not to prepare onions or garlic in advance, as they can leave a nasty smell in the fridge and freezer. Frozen onions and garlic can be purchased in supermarkets and are a great time saver
- Steam vegetables in bulk, allow to cool then store in an airtight container and refrigerate for 3-4 days

Chicken

- If you buy your chicken from the butcher, ask them to dice it up for you.. You may want to phone them in advance so that it is ready when you arrive. Divide the diced chicken into resealable bags before freezing so that when it is time to use, you don't defrost more than you require. Write the weight on the bag for future reference

Recipes

- Identify some recipes you really enjoy and multiply the ingredients to make more meals which can be put in the fridge or freezer