

# KITCHEN DE-CLUTTER

## *Nutrition*

### **Kitchen De-clutter**

#### **1. Organize your Food by Category**

Whether you have a walk-in pantry or a small cabinet space in your apartment, an organized pantry is a great weight loss strategy. Label the areas or just keep a visual separation.

Start with a full pantry clean out by emptying all of the shelves. Divide food into 3 categories:

- Toss: if its expired, or lacks nutritional value, toss it
- Keep (opened): make sure the seal is still effective, combine if you have 2 open packages, and consider what you might move into a clear storage container for ease of use/refilling/identification (perhaps lentils/dried beans/grains)
- Keep (unopened): store unopened containers behind opened containers with the foods with the earliest expiration date toward the front. When you purchase a new food, set it behind the one already in your pantry to follow the “first in, first out” rule and prevent food waste. This also give you a chance to take a regular inventory and stay in control of the foods in your kitchen.

#### **2. Contain your containers**

Empty your container storage and determine which are worth keeping. Those that are bent, cracked or do not have a tight-fitting lid may be worth recycling. If you need to invest in a few additional containers, think of the best sizes/shapes and material for your purposes.

Invest in container lid separators to keep lids from disappearing and keep only what you need and use.

#### **3. Homemade snack pack basket**

The snack basket is a simple but oh-so-effective kitchen hack. Buy healthy snacks in bulk (the most cost-effective strategy) and separate into individual servings for a quick grab-n-go for work or a snack for the kids that will give them the fuel they need. Contain snacks to one basket so everyone in your house knows where to turn to satisfy hunger. For refrigerated foods, keep a portion of the fridge – either a shelf or drawer, devoted to healthy snacks.

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A few ideas for your pantry snack basket:

- Unsalted nuts and unsweetened dried fruit
- Individual package of almond butter and a smart cracker alternative such as Mary's Gone Crackers
- Homemade granola bars (if using store-bought, select one with no added sugar and 5 ingredients or less such as a Larabar)

And for your refrigerator snack shelf:

- Washed or frozen berries and plain (unsweetened) yogurt
- Cut veggies and bean dip
- Any fruit
- Hardboiled eggs
- Portion of leftover grain salad
- Homemade green juice
- Leftover cut chicken with a homemade dipping sauce

#### **4. Make your meal-plan visible**

Keep your meal plan in the kitchen for all to see. This eliminates the question of “what’s for dinner” and also minimizes complaints about dinner since its clearly printed. It is also a helpful reminder of what you need to do (defrost frozen fish or add ingredients to crock pot as examples) to limit the chance of forgetting when life gets busy. Keep printed recipes easily accessible for the week to reduce time spent searching (this alone can literally shave 5 minutes off of dinner prep).

When you are deciding where you will keep your plan, this is also a good opportunity to go through the recipe cards, cookbooks you may have stored and determine which you still use, which may be stored away from the kitchen and how you want to store recipes in the future.