

ASK THE COACH

Answers to the most common wellness questions that we get from students and from busy parents like you!



PARENTS: DEAR COACH, WE'RE CONSTANTLY RUNNING AROUND TO PRACTICES. ANY TIPS FOR PREPARING MEALS ON LIMITED TIME?

You want to create a situation where it doesn't seem like a hassle to come home and prepare a meal, versus the convenience of picking something up while on the road (especially at the end of a tiring day). Our clients prefer the taste and health benefits of home cooked meals, so we talk about this one a lot in both group and custom programs.

We've got plenty of ideas. I'll mention just a few and our recommendation will be to pick one that could fit into your unique situation and gradually try working it into the routine before incorporating another or asking us for more tips directly.

Proteins: Don't store so much protein in the freezer. If you're driving ball players home and they're ready for dinner, you're likely not going to consistently feel like thawing a piece of frozen fish and building a meal around it. However, if the protein is thawed or (even better yet) cooked and waiting in the fridge, you'll be more inclined to tell them to wait.

Grains: Similarly, when whole grains are pre-cooked and stored in the fridge, it will be quicker and easier to pull together a side dish or add it for bulk to some stew or soup. Some families carve out some time to prepare a week's worth of fridge stockers in advance but we prefer to just double the recipes when you are already cooking for a different nightly meal and then save ½ for a later dinner or lunch that week.

Pantry: A proactive pantry and stocked produce drawers are also critical in keeping it easy, while integrating a variety of whole foods.

Slow cooking: Let your appliances do the heavy lifting while you tend to other tasks. With our clients, the key to repeatable success once again is to have recipes with hassle free ingredients that are always ready and on-hand that don't feel overwhelming to pull together earlier in the day.

In addition to reaping the benefits with taste, nourishment and health, you should also realize the financial savings of eating in versus out.

Check out some meals that we easily pull together here:

<http://www.empowered-wellness.com/blog>

KID'S: HEY COACH, WHEN CAN I START HELPING IN THE KITCHEN?

There are a lot of dangerous things going on in the kitchen, including sharp objects and things that can start fires. Every family feels differently, so you'll want to discuss with your parents. Our kids are 8, 7 and 3 and they are still only allowed to use knives and appliances with adults helping, which turns out to be almost every morning and night!

Our little chefs increased their kitchen time when we got nylon knives. We use real foods, so there is a lot of chopping and dicing. These plastic-like knives won't cut our skin but they do serious damage to carrots and apples! In our cooking programs, we use these knives and teach kids fun ways to think like chefs by balancing flavors and textures. You can check out our enrichment programs at: empowered-wellness.com

'Coach' Ryan Lonnett is a Certified Health Counselor and a Commissioner / Coach in the local Reston Little League. Leveraging his culinary, nutrition and fitness training, Ryan founded a Wellness Company that provides wellness solutions in schools, including their popular After School Enrichment Program ("Cooking for Superhumans!") and unique Summer Camps ("Design Your Own Restaurant" and "Are We Really What We Eat? - A Food Science Camp").

Ryan sits on several community boards and steering committees, frequently delivers presentations in school, community or corporate assemblies, and occasionally can be seen or heard in the media sharing best practices from his years of experience in this unique arena.