Set Up Your Kitchen for Weight-Loss Success

In this session, we’ll walk you through the process of stocking and re-organizing your fridge and pantry so you’ll have all the foods and tools you need to make quick, easy and healthy meals and snacks. It’s easy to put this job off, so make yourself accountable by letting your coach know when you plan to do it in the coming week.
There’s No Place Like Home

The kitchen is the heart of the home, the saying goes.

Is that how you feel about your kitchen? Is it the one place in your home where you feel totally at ease, where family gathers, where you create not only good meals but good memories, too?

Or do you feel uncomfortable in your kitchen because you lack the skills, confidence or tools to be a healthy chef? Do you steer clear of it because you find it hard to withstand the temptation of high-calorie foods? Do you have a love-hate relationship with your kitchen—you may love healthy, homemade meals, but you struggle to find the time or energy to prepare them?

If it’s any of the latter scenarios, we’re going to help you feel more at home in the kitchen. Embracing your inner chef—yes, he or she is in there somewhere!—can help you reach your weight-loss goals. Not thrilled by the idea of spending more (or any) time in the kitchen? Relax! You don’t have to have a culinary degree or slave for hours over the stove to create meals and snacks that are healthful and delicious. And remember, if you’re ever too busy or overwhelmed to put together a “real meal”, sub in a shake, bar or frozen dinner. See page 14 of the Real Foods Nutrition Guide for details on these “no-brainer” meals.

Let’s get going—it’s time for you to channel your inner “top chef”! (And if someone else in your home does much of the cooking, the two of you can read this session together.)

“Let’s be real”

More control + Less temptation = Fewer Calories

Cook Your Own Meals, and You’ll Have:

1. More Control
   You decide exactly what goes into your meals when you make them at home. This often translates to a lower-calorie, lower-fat, lower-sodium (which can help lower blood pressure), and overall more nutritious meal.

2. Less Temptation
   You don’t have to deal with the never-ending bread basket, that trans-fat-fried appetizer, the high-sugar specialty drink or that death-by-chocolate dessert when you already have something healthful and satisfying in the fridge or your lunch bag.

3. Fewer Calories
   More control + less temptation = fewer calories. One study found that an average restaurant meal has more than 1,300 calories. If you’re on the 1,250 plan, that’s more calories than you need the entire day! On the 1,550 plan, that’s 84% of your daily calories. The same meals made at home can taste just as delicious and have significantly fewer calories and less sodium and fat. For instance a seemingly “healthy” turkey burger at your local chain restaurant can run you a whopping 900 calories, whereas a 4-ounce turkey burger made at home with a whole wheat bun, a slice of cheese, and some avocado, lettuce, and tomato has just 350 to 400 calories. You’re saving more than 50 percent in calories just by firing up your own skillet (or even better, your grill).

4. More Savings
   You can save money by dining out less often—that means more green to spend on healthy foods that will transform your body. You might even have some cash left over to put towards the new wardrobe you’ll need after you hit your weight-loss goals!
Give Your Fridge a Facelift

Your refrigerator is about to get a makeover—because when you stock your fridge with smart, delicious choices, shedding pounds becomes that much easier.

Use These Tips To Give Your Fridge a Facelift

1. **Toss it**
   A cluttered fridge tends to make it harder to spot those healthy ingredients, meals and snacks. So get rid of expired condiments and anything that has been sitting in your fridge that you’re not going to use.

   Hopefully, you’ve already started weaning yourself off of soda and other highly sweetened beverages, including lemonade, sweetened tea, and juice, so if there are any of these drinks hiding in your fridge, you can get rid of them as well. You learned in session 3 how these sips can contribute to weight gain. In session 9, you’ll learn more about why they’re so dangerous to your health. Sugary beverages can be addictive, so do your best to work toward the ultimate goal of no more than three per month.

2. **Clean it out**
   Once everything is out of the refrigerator, wipe down the shelves and rinse out crisper drawers to make sure you’re starting over with a clean, fresh-smelling fridge. Repeat these two steps to clean out your freezer.

3. **Refill and reorganize**
   Now for the fun part! Armed with your supermarket know-how from session 6 and your Real Appeal Staples shopping list (page 186, Real Foods Nutrition Guide), you are ready to re-stock your fridge and freezer with healthful options that allow you to put together quick and tasty meals and snacks for the week. The tips that follow will show you how to organize your fridge for weight-loss success.
Anatomy of a Refrigerator

1 Top Shelf

Healthy foods you want front and center. Since this is often the warmest shelf, you should stock healthy foods that aren’t highly perishable or foods that don’t necessarily have to be refrigerated but you prefer to eat cold, such as:

- A pitcher of Mint water with Lime (page 165 of the Real Foods Nutrition Guide)
- A bowl of citrus fruit (lemons, limes, oranges)
- Pre-cut fruits or veggies for snacks cut up carrots, pineapple, melon, peppers, broccoli and so on.

2 Middle Shelf, Front and Center

Nutritious grab-and-go snacks. This is prime real estate, so put good-for-you foods that you have pre-portioned or that come pre-packaged in a single serving size. Store foods in clear, see-through plastic containers so you can easily identify what you’re looking for. Place other items (like your Mom’s leftover apple pie) behind these Real Appeal-approved picks. Remember, out of sight, out of mouth!

- Healthy, ready-to-eat meals, or ready-to-go components of meals such as hard-boiled eggs, prepped tuna or salmon salad.
- Cut-up fruits and veggies for meals. Use sliced onions and peppers for stir-fries, fajitas, tacos, and recipes such as the Chicken Baked in Paper with Onion and Sweet Pepper, (page 88 of the Foods Nutrition Guide). Not all fruits and veggies have to go in the crisper drawer; placing picks you intend to eat or use that day on the middle shelf will make them easier to see and access.
- Leftovers, which you can take to work for lunch or use as ingredients for dinner the next day.
- Grab-and-go snacks, such as celery with peanut butter, string cheese, individually portioned hummus (to pair with crackers), and veggies with the Spinach Dip on page 126 of the Real Foods Nutrition Guide. (Be sure to check out other great snacks starting on page 114 of the guide.)
Baby Steps

If your goal is to make the switch to fat-free milk or other non-dairy milk from full-fat or two percent, try the slow-and-steady approach. Take one step down at a time—for instance, go from two percent to one percent for a week or two. Then once you’re used to the consistency and taste of the lower fat milk, take another step down. Small changes will not only help you acclimate to the flavor, but they will also make it easier to gradually adjust to your healthy new lifestyle.

Smart Snack Suggestion

Leave a few pieces of fruit on the counter in plain sight. That way, you’ll be more likely to reach for it instead of a cookie or other high-calorie item when hunger strikes. (Note: All fruits and veggies—except for bananas, plantains and tomatoes and fruit that still needs to ripen, such as mangos, papayas, persimmons, and pears—should be refrigerated according to the tips above.) To keep produce from going bad, put only a day’s worth in your fruit bowl.

3 Bottom Shelf

Healthy, highly perishable foods. This is the coldest part of some fridges, especially those with bottom freezers, making it the ideal location for the foods below; if your refrigerator is coldest at the top, that’s where the following foods belong.

- Dairy (milk, soy milk, yogurt, cheese)
- Eggs
- Raw meat, fish, or poultry you plan to cook within 1 to 2 days. (Storing these at the lowest level of the fridge also reduces the risk of any raw drippings landing on and contaminating other foods.)

4 Crisper Drawers

Fruits and Vegetables. There are two types of drawers that allow you to control the amount of moisture that the foods within are exposed to.

- Vegetables should go in the drawer labeled “vegetables” or “high humidity;” the humidity prevents them from losing moisture and shriveling up, especially leafy greens. Leave them in their original package or in a loosely tied perforated plastic bag.
- Fruit that should be refrigerated, such as apples, plums, grapes, and berries, should go in the other drawer, often labeled “crisper.” When fruits (and a few veggies) ripen, they release ethylene gas, which can cause veggies to spoil more quickly.
Side Door

Condiments. This is the warmest area of the fridge, so use it for condiments (most contain vinegar or another acidic ingredient, which helps them stay fresh for longer without being as cold), including:

- Ketchup (regular, organic or low-sodium; skip the low-sugar varieties, which usually contain artificial sweeteners.)
- Salsa
- Salad dressing. Choose regular vinaigrettes; avoid reduced-fat and fat-free versions, which often have added sugars and are not as satisfying as their full-fat counterparts. You can go for reduced-fat when it comes to creamier dressings, such as Caesar, because they offer considerable calorie savings.
- Nut oils (such as sesame and peanut oil), nuts and nut butters
- Fresh herbs in jars (see Stocking Strategy tip below)
- Bottles of water and seltzer

Refrigerator Door

Inspiration:

- Pin pretty pictures of healthy foods on your fridge (or kitchen bulletin board). Visual cues are powerful suggestions.
- Hang a photo of a favorite outfit that you’re looking forward to wearing or clothing from your favorite catalog that you’ll reward yourself with when you hit your goal.
- Keep your grocery list on your fridge too, so it’s easy to jot down healthy items to buy during your next shopping trip. Another suggestion: Keep a small magnetic dry erase board with your rough meal plan for the week. This helps you stick to your meal planning goals and also reminds you to do any defrosting, marinating, or other prep before it’s too late!

Freezer

Check your Real Appeal Staples shopping list for the best frozen fruit, vegetables, vegetable burgers, salmon or turkey patties, entrees and meals to stock in your freezer.

Grocery List:

- Eggs
- Milk
- Whole Grain Bread
- Orange Juice
- Granola
- Apples
- Olive Oil
- Brown Rice

I CAN DO THIS!!
Create a Foolproof Pantry

Your pantry can also help promote weight loss, as long as it’s clean, organized and stocked with the right stuff. But let’s face it, the pantry is often home to crunchy, sweet, salty, and crispy edibles.

And if you have a family or live with others, you can’t just throw them all away. That’s where some of these plan-saving pointers will come in handy.

The mantra out of sight, out of mind is something to remember as you’re reorganizing. You’ll want to store the foods you’d like to eat less of (think processed snack foods and desserts) on the highest shelves of your pantry. You may even consider storing them in dark containers so you don’t see the contents.

And the foods that you want to reach for most often, those you’ll be using to make healthy meals and snacks, should be staring at you when you open the door. Try putting them in plastic or see-through containers—even try labeling them—for easier visibility.

Place items that are used together next to each other on the shelves. This not only makes putting meals together easier and faster, but also reminds you of all of your options for those times you feel a little less creatively inspired. Here are a few examples of foods you may want to group together.

**Whole grains:**
- quinoa, brown rice, whole grain pasta

**Canned/jarred foods:**
- beans, tomatoes, tuna, salmon, sardines, low-sodium pasta sauce

**Breakfast and snack foods:**
- dried fruit, nuts, oats, whole grain cereals

**Flavoring agents:**
- dried herbs and spices, low-sodium soy sauce, vinegars, oils, honey
The Kitchen Tools
You Can’t Live Without

Counter and cabinet space might be tight in your kitchen, but there are a few tools you need to create healthful, delicious, nutrient-packed foods in the shortest amount of time. Several of the items are in your Real Appeal Kit; if you don’t already have the rest, you may want to invest in these gadgets:

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<tr>
<th>Tool</th>
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<tr>
<td>Food scale</td>
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<td>Perfect Portion Plate</td>
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Nice to have gadgets

You can get by without the following items, though you may want to consider purchasing one or two of these time-savers when you can to round out your healthy kitchen:

- Food processor
- Additional skillets of different sizes, such as 7-inch and 12-inch
- Additional knives: Bread knife, 6-inch chef’s knife
- Refillable Olive Oil sprayer
Commitment Contract

I’ll set up my kitchen for weight-loss success.

A well-organized kitchen stocked with healthy ingredients will make it easier to prepare healthy meals—and lose weight! This week, I will focus on setting up my kitchen to help promote weight loss.

☐ I’ll clean out my refrigerator and pantry, and reorganize them so they encourage healthy eating.

☐ I’ll stock my refrigerator, freezer and kitchen pantry with foods from the Real Appeal Staples shopping list.

☐ I’ll invest in the must-have tools so I’m able to put together healthy, homemade meals.

☐ I will keep an ongoing shopping list that I’ll take with me to the store each week.

☐ Meanwhile, I’ll continue my other healthy habits (weighing in, tracking, eating meals from the Real Foods Nutrition Guide, staying within my calorie range) to the best of my ability.

My signature: ______________________________