



## Packing a Healthy Lunch .....easier than you think!



Benefits of Brown Bagging: 1) It is healthier, 2) It gives you more time, 3) You'll save money.

- 1) The typical fast food lunch (burger and fries) is 2,100 calories and up to 100 grams of fat. That's all your calories for the day in one meal! Conversely, a home-packed, lean sandwich and snack are closer to 500 calories and under 15 grams of fat, depending on your choices.
- 2) When you consider the travel time—going to and from getting your food—it adds up. Save time by packing your lunch and eating at work. We do recommend that you eat away from your desk when possible and be conscious of the food you are eating.
- 3) The average “to go” meal is \$7. Even if you are eating out only three days a week, that's \$21.00 per week and \$84.00 per month. In a year's time, you could buy a round trip ticket to Europe!

### Brown Bagging with Ease

There is no doubt that brown-bagging your lunch requires a little more effort than standing in line to order. But, the dividends it pays in better health, digestion, and sense of well-being are worth it! The following will help you get started and keep going:

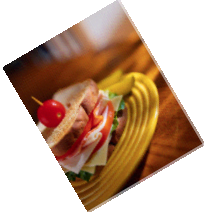
- Plan a weekly lunch menu in advance (it takes 10 minutes!)
- Pack your lunch the night before (if you are forgetful, put a note on the seat of your car or with your keys)
- Keep cold foods cold (treat yourself to a cool cooler!)
- Review the food facts on what you pack (minimize packaged, processed foods). In general, if your food label is full of ingredients that you don't recognize, avoid it.
- Consider using frozen bread if you take a sandwich. This will help keep your sandwich cool at room temperature as the bread thaws.
- Choose healthy leftovers—they can make a mid-day meal. Even if you only cook dinner two nights a week, plan to make more than you need so you will have a lunch already prepared. Once a week, cook several chicken breasts so that you can easily make a salad, or chicken sandwich, or healthy wrap.

## What To Pack?

- ✚ **Play With Bread.** Tired of sandwiches? Play with your bread.....there are so many healthy options! Choose a whole-wheat bread, pita pocket, wrap, or roll. Try to choose whole-wheat products whenever possible. Look for “whole wheat flour” as the first ingredient.)



- ✚ **[http://www.sparkpeople.com/resource/nutrition\\_articles.asp?id=472](http://www.sparkpeople.com/resource/nutrition_articles.asp?id=472) Sandwich Musts.** Make a better sandwich by avoiding bologna, corned beef, or pastrami--instead use low-fat cold cuts or homemade left over meats (i.e. chicken breast or turkey if available) and load your sandwich with fresh veggies, such as lettuce, tomato, peppers, onions. The fresh veggies on your sandwich are a great way to get a vegetable serving in! Keep veggies in baggie until you are ready to eat—this will keep your bread from getting soggy.



- ✚ **See The Greens.** Salad is one of the best ways to get more vegetables and fruit into your diet. Try an apple in your salad—it adds sweetness and a surprise for your taste buds. Try to avoid creamy dressings—they add extra fat and calories. Try an olive oil and balsamic vinegar dressing; add your favorite spices.



- ✚ **Add a Fruit.** Get a least one serving of fruit in for your day during lunch. If eating an apple or orange doesn't sound appealing, try other fruits. Just get creative—try applesauce, dried fruit, or even a small smoothie with a little low-fat yogurt.



- ✚ **Soup is Good Food.** Homemade soups can make for a tasty lunch with low calories. When you are in a hurry and want to make soup, look for leftovers in your fridge (baked potato, steamed broccoli, chicken breast, etc.). Leftovers make great soup ingredients. Soup is filling and healthy. Use low sodium broths and stocks. Avoid soups that are cream-based, such as potato soup, clam chowder, and broccoli cheddar because of the high calorie and fat count.

- ✚ **Rotate Your Selection.** Avoid packing the same thing each day—you will lose interest quickly. Go for a sandwich one day, salad the next, and a soup the third as your main ingredient and build variety around those selections.

- ✚ **Don't Forget To Hydrate.** Drink water all day long to stay hydrated, but select flavorful liquids when you can with lunch. Iced and hot teas and/or lemonade will satisfy your taste buds. Limit diet and regular sodas to special occasions.



## Simple Sample Menu

Try these simple sample menus to get started:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Salad (include your favorite veggies/fruit) and thin strips of chicken, turkey or fish and an olive oil-based dressing.	1 cup of chili with beans, a small side salad, 4-6 whole wheat crackers.	Homemade vegetable or chicken vegetable soup or stew, 10-12 almonds, small piece of fruit	Turkey or Chicken wrap (on small wrap), add veggies to wrap or small side salad	½ sandwich (chicken, fish, turkey or lean deli meat) on whole wheat, small apple, small bag of baked chips

Prep time for this menu is minimal.

1. **Vegetable Prep. 20 minutes.** Wash and prepare your vegetables on Sunday night. This includes preparing your salad for Monday's lunch and your side salad for Tuesday. If you are worried that the salad will be soggy, be sure to dry the lettuce very well and leave tomatoes out until you are ready to eat. While prepping vegetables, set aside those you will need for chili and soup/stew.
2. **Meat Prep. 0 minutes.** While you are preparing your vegetables, sauté or bake your chicken, turkey, or fish for the week. Cook enough chicken, turkey or fish for dinner 1 or 2 nights too!
3. **Prepare Chili and Soup/Stew. 20 minutes.** These can be prepared simultaneously. If you would like several 20 min. chili and soup/stew recipes, e-mail us at: [Pilates@proskillsplus.com](mailto:Pilates@proskillsplus.com).

**Variety is the key when packing your lunch, balance your carbohydrates (bread, fruits, vegetables), fat (nuts, natural peanut butter, olives, almonds), and protein (lean meat, fish, eggs, beans, and cheese—if you can tolerate it).**