

# *Harvest Potential*

BY THE EDN INITIATIVE

JANUARY 2023

A GUIDE FOR  
WORKING  
WOMEN &  
BUSY MOMS

10  
EVIDENCE  
-BASED  
PRODUCTIVITY  
TIPS

SUCCEED AT  
WORK &  
SCHOOL



EXERCISE ON A  
BUDGET  
STRONG &  
HEALTHY  
PHYSICAL &  
COGNITIVE  
HEALTH  
QUICK  
MEALPREP



# *Dear Reader...*

Welcome back to Harvet Potential!

Last year, we introduced Harvest Potential with the vision to educate and nourish the minds of our readers with the latest nutritional research in female and child health. Aware of the impact of nutrition on diseases, longevity, the immune system, and learning, we believe that nutritious food provides you with opportunity to conquer challenges, meet your goals, and live the life of your dreams(1).

At the EDN initiative, we believe that food is opportunity, and opportunity is for everyone!

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), physical activity “has significant health benefits for hearts, bodies, and minds”. Physical activity prevents and manages “noncommunicable disease”, reduces symptoms of mental illness, and enhances learning, thinking, and growth for young children. Despite such benefits, “more than 80% of the world's adolescent population is insufficiently physically active” and “1 in 4 adults do not meet the global recommended levels of physical activity”(2).

In an effort to provide you with a holistic understanding of the human body, and help you gain insight into multiple aspects of health, we decided to include **evidence-based fitness education and advice**. Moreover, Harvest Potential’s second issue is dedicated to how **food and fitness can work to improve physical and cognitive health providing children, working women, and busy moms** with the education they need to lead a healthy, optimal, and productive life.

Sincerely,

The EDN Initiative Executive Team

**Disclaimer: No content within this magazine should be used as a substitute for direct medical advice from a qualified clinician.**

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1. Nutrition [Internet]. [cited 2022 Aug 12]. Available from:  
<https://www.who.int/health-topics/nutrition>
  2. Physical activity [Internet]. [cited 2022 Aug 12]. Available from:  
<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/physical-activity>



# 5 Productivity Tips for Working Women & Busy Moms



Juggling multiple tasks and striving for healthy work and life balance, being a working woman comes with a lot of challenges. As a result, it is important to make sure that you are supporting and fueling your body optimally in order to be your most productive self.

Implementing these 5 long, and short-term productivity tips will help you do just that!

## The Power of the Mediterranean Diet: The Key to Optimal Cognitive Function

A study published in 2017 assessed the relationship between diet and cognitive performance of 1,865 individuals(3). It was found that individuals more adherent to the Mediterranean diet had a lower risk of developing dementia. In addition, the Mediterranean diet is associated with better performance in memory, language, and visuospatial perception (which is the ability to perceive visual information in the environment, integrate it with information from other senses, and develop understanding).

### OUR TIP

The Mediterranean diet is mainly composed of plant-based foods, whole grains, legumes, nuts, herbs, and seeds(4). Implement these 4 changes to adopt the diet:

1. Use olive oil
2. Swap red meat for fish and poultry
3. Avoid dairy and alcohol
4. Swap desserts for fruits

3. Anastasiou CA, Yannakoulia M, Kosmidis MH, Dardiotis E, Hadjigeorgiou GM, Sakka P, et al. Mediterranean diet and cognitive health: Initial results from the Hellenic Longitudinal Investigation of Ageing and Diet. *PLOS ONE*. 2017 Aug 1;12(8):e0182048.

4. Mediterranean diet for heart health [Internet]. Mayo Clinic. [cited 2022 Aug 12]. Available from: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/in-depth/mediterranean-diet/art-20047801>

# How are you Sleeping?

There is a correlation between poor sleep quality and lower academic performance, but how does diet influence sleep quality and thus performance?(5)

A link between high fish and vegetable intake with good sleep quality has been established(6). Additionally, a diet high in carbohydrates and confectionary is associated with poor sleep quality. The type of carbohydrates seems to be more important than the amount consumed as poor sleep quality has been associated with the consumption of confectionery, energy drinks, and noodles instead of rice.

## OUR TIP

Chose your carbohydrates wisely!

Consider swapping noodles and processes carbohydrates with whole grains, wild rice, quinoa, and oats.

For breakfast, swap your sugary cereal and white bread for whole wheat grain cereals, oatmeal, whole grain toast.

For lunch and dinner, consider adding wild rice, quinoa, barley, and whole grain pasta to your diet. To satisfy your dessert cravings, consider swaping chocolate bars and cake for granola bars, fruits, and substitute whole grain and nut-based flours for white baking flour.

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5. Gilbert SP, Weaver CC. Sleep Quality and Academic Performance in University Students: A Wake-Up Call for College Psychologists. *J Coll Stud Psychother.* 2010 Sep 27;24(4):295–306.

6. St-Onge MP, Mikic A, Pietrolungo CE. Effects of Diet on Sleep Quality. *Adv Nutr.* 2016 Sep 1;7(5):938–49.



# Can Hunger Affect Performance?

A recent study, published in 2019, explored how meals influence student performance in India. It was found that students' performance increased due to their participation in the meal program, likely due to the alleviation of hunger. It is likely that these school meals boosted their attention by alleviating hunger(7).

## OUR TIP

For optimal attention, make sure that you are not hungry for prolonged time periods. Do not skip meals and eat small snacks throughout the day. See our MEAL PLAN SEGMENT FOR QUICK MEAL IDEAS

# Exercise & for a Healthy Workforce

An article published by the University of Southern Denmark displayed how moderate to vigorous cardio training, strength training, core stability and balance exercises are associated with positive health outcomes(8). For example, neck pain was reduced among office and computer workers, dentists, industrial laboratory technicians, health care workers and fighter pilots. Moreover, increased muscle strength and decreased body mass index are associated with greater productivity.

## OUR TIP

To increase your productivity, reduce workplace injury, and improve health outcomes, lead an active lifestyle. According to Harvard Health Publishing, positive health outcomes can be caused by as little as 8 minutes of intense daily exercise(9). However, the greatest benefit was seen in people who exercised for an average of 63 to 88 minutes a day. SEE OUR EXCERCISE SEGMENT FOR A DETAILED GUIDE!

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7. Hunger and Performance in the Classroom [Internet]. [cited 2022 Aug 12]. Available from: <https://www.iza.org/publications/dp/12627/hunger-and-performance-in-the-classroom>

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9. MD GC. Exercise: You may need less than you think [Internet]. Harvard Health. 2015 [cited 2022 Aug 12]. Available from: <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/how-much-exercise-do-you-really-need-less-than-you-think-201512088770>



**HEALTHY WOMEN  
ARE STRONG  
WOMEN**

# Exercise & Nutrition

## The building blocks to your child's success

### Exercise and Academic Performance

Nutrition is definitely important; however, we cannot forget about exercise! According to a recent study done by the International Journal of School and Cognitive Psychology, exercising for at least thirty minutes a day has not only shown to lead to better academic performances in school but also higher levels of motivation and happiness(10). Exercise has been shown to elevate proteins beneficial for brain adaptability, the growth, survival, maturation, and maintenance of nerve cells, as well as growth hormones.

#### OUR TIP

To help your child meet their daily physical activity requirement, motivate them to exercise by:

- Supporting their participation in sports and physical activities
  - Arrange playdates with friends that include exercise
- SEE OUR EXERCISE SEGMENT FOR A DETAILED GUIDE!

### Dietary Fiber and Cognitive Control

You may already be aware that fibre intake is linked to several physical health benefits, including reduced risk of cardiovascular disease, obesity, and colon cancer. However, the benefits of dietary fibre also extend beyond chronic disease prevention and may contribute to brain health and cognitive function. A study published in 2014 shows that dietary fibre intake is associated with increased accuracy of attentional inhibition tasks, cognitive control, and overall brain health in prepubertal children. Despite these known benefits, statistics show that 90% of American children fail to meet the recommended fibre intake for their respective ages(11).

#### OUR TIP

Introduce fibre to your child's diet! At school, children are constantly tasked with brain-squeezing problems and assignments that require a vast amount of attentiveness and focus, which studies have shown to both be improved with a high-fibre diet. Some fibre-rich foods that you should add to your child's diet include(12):

- Oatmeal
- Nuts
- Apples and blueberries
- Quinoa
- Brown rice

10. Archer T, Garcia D. EDITORIAL: Physical Exercise Influences Academic Performance and Well-being in Children and Adolescents. *Int J Sch Cogn Psychol*. 2014 Jan 1;1.

11. Khan NA, Raine LB, Drollette ES, Scudder MR, Kramer AF, Hillman CH. Dietary Fiber Is Positively Associated with Cognitive Control among Prepubertal Children. *J Nutr*. 2015 Jan;145(1):143–9.

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# Mixed-grain Diet

A study published in 2012 indicates that a mixed-grain-rich diet has beneficial effects on cognitive performance in young adolescents(13). The main benefit is the prevention of cognitive deterioration when under mental fatigue, increasing the amount of time one can focus with minimal procrastination and distraction. Making a mixed-grain-rich diet is potentially helpful for your child's academic performance, problem-solving skills, and overall critical thinking skills!

## OUR TIP

Implement mixed grains into the foods your child loves! Easy and tasty swaps include(14):

- Brown rice instead of white rice
- Mixing quinoa or barley into rice
- Adding whole-wheat cereal into your child's favourite cereal
- Whole-wheat bread, pasta, or crackers instead of white

## Child nutrition and depression

Caffeine! It makes you feel strong, happy, and ready to take on anything that comes your way... or does it? According to a recent study done by Newcastle University's school of psychology, there is a positive correlation between consumption of large amounts of caffeine and stress, anxiety, and depression in both adults and children. This can negatively affect your child's academic, social, and family life.

Children, although may not be regularly drinking caffeinated beverages such as coffee or tea, they may enjoy energy and soft drinks, which have a large amount of caffeine.

(15,16)

## OUR TIP

There are many delicious options that can replace caffeinated drinks, see some ideas below!

- Caffeinated Soda → Carbonated water and Juice
- Energy drinks → Juices and smoothies

13. Chung YC, Park CH, Kwon HK, Park YM, Kim YS, Doo JK, et al. Improved cognitive performance following supplementation with a mixed-grain diet in high school students: A randomized controlled trial. *Nutrition*. 2012 Feb;1:28(2):165–72.

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# HEALTHY CHILDREN ARE SUCCESSFUL CHILDREN



# Smart Exercise

The benefits of physical activity on physical and mental health for both children and adults have been illustrated in our 5 Productivity Tips for Working Women, and Exercise & Nutrition: The building blocks to your child's success segments, but how exactly should you incorporate exercise in your life?

## Which Type of Exercise is Right for You?

From Pilates and weight lifting to high-intensity interval training (HIIT) and yoga, the options seem endless. To help clear up the clouds on exercise mania, use our exercise guide below(17):

- **Aerobic/Cardiovascular physical activity:** These intense activities aim to maintain and improve heart and lung fitness. Examples include but are not limited to walking, jogging,, bicycling, soccer, and swimming.
- **Muscle-strengthening activity/ resistance training:** These activities aim to maintain and increase muscle strength and endurance. Examples include Pilates and weight-lifting.
- **Flexibility training/Stretching:** By stretching your muscles, such training aims to increase elasticity and range of motion. Improving flexibility can aid in daily activity performance, as well as other types of exercise. Examples include Yoga and Tai Chi.



17. Boston 677 Huntington Avenue, Ma 02115 +1495- 1000. Staying Active [Internet]. The Nutrition Source. 2012 [cited 2022 Aug 12]. Available from: <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/staying-active/>

# How much Exercise is enough? See What the World Health Organization (WHO) Recommends!

## Infants (less than 1 year)

As much as possible floor-based play with 30 minute in prone position daily.

## Children (1-2 years)

At least 180 minutes of daily physical activity at any intensity.

## Children (3-4 years)

At least 180 minted of daily physical activity , of which 60 minutes is moderate to vigorous intensity.

## Children and adolescents (5-17 years)

At least 60 minutes of daily aerobic exercises and high intensity activities at least 3 times a week.

## Adults (18-64)

At least 150-300 minutes of moderate aerobic physical activity or 75-150 minutes of vigorous intensity activities throughout the week.

# Eating for Exercise

What you eat before and after your workouts can impact your performance and the benefits your gain from your exercise sessions.

## Before Workout

Working out can be quite taxing on the body, which is why it is important to consume small energy-rich foods before your workout sessions. According to Harvard Health Publishing, eating a carbohydrate-rich snack can provide the fuel you need to move your body.

### Pre-Workout snacks:

1. Fruits, such as banana
  2. Whole grain bread, such as rye or whole-wheat bread
  3. Oatmeal (not instant) and cereal
- (18,19)

## After Workout

The type of food you eat can help make the most out of your workout, which is why eating a protein-rich meal after your workout aid in muscle growth.

### Post-workout meals:

1. Lean chicken
2. Greek yogurt
3. Beans, such as lentils
4. Salmon
5. Eggs
6. Nuts

(20)

2. Physical activity [Internet]. [cited 2022 Aug 12]. Available from: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/physical-activity>

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# MOVE FOR HEALTH



# *Exercise on a Budget*

We all need to move our bodies to live healthy lives, but that does not mean that we need to spend hundreds of dollars a year on gym equipment and memberships! Here are # ways you can exercise for free.

## CARDIO

Here are some ways to raise your heart rate without our breaking the bank.

- Try walking, jogging, or running in your neighbourhood
- Play basketball, soccer, volleyball, or tennis at your local park
- Go on a hike or swim if a trail or body of water are accessible

## STRENGTH TRAINING

You do not need gym equipment or a personal trainer to build muscle! Youtube can be your best friend on this exercise journey.

### **Blogilates by Cassey Ho**

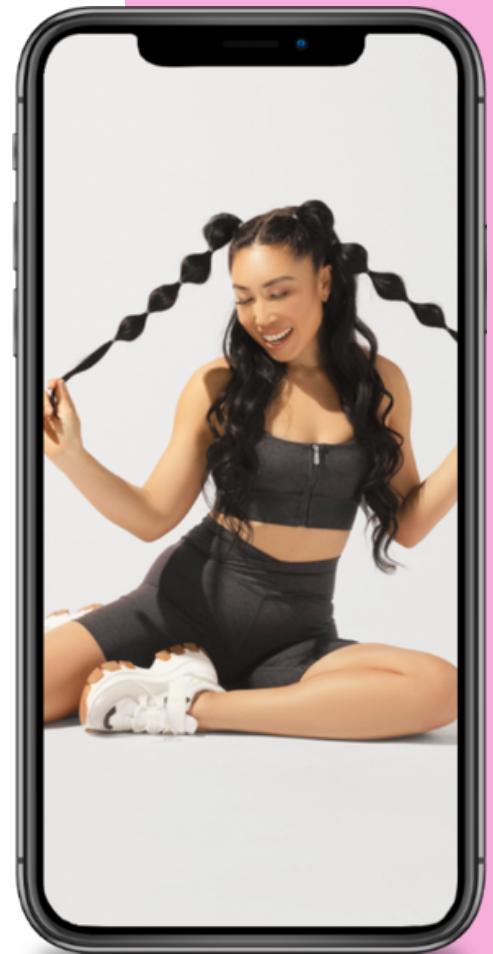
Known for your motivating spirit and creative workouts, Cassey Ho brings Pilates to your home with free video workout sessions. She offers beginner, intermediate, and advanced Pilates training. For those who need some guidance, Ho also provides monthly workout plans and programs that are easy to follow.

(21,22)

### **Jessicasmithtv by Jessica Smith**

If you are a beginner on this exercise journey, Jessicasmithtv is the right channel for you! Smith focuses on low-impact workouts that help improve your mobility and endurance, as well as strengthen your muscles. From short 15-minute exercises to full-body 40-minute workouts, Smith is here to guide you through it all.

(23,24)



(21,22)

21. Blogilates | Cassey Ho - #1 Female Fitness Channel on YouTube [Internet]. Blogilates. [cited 2022 Aug 12]. Available from: <https://www.blogilates.com/>

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24. jessicasmithtv - YouTube [Internet]. [cited 2022 Aug 12]. Available from: <https://www.youtube.com/c/Jessicasmithtvfit/videos>

## **Kayla Itsines by Kayla Itsines**

This fitness instructor has a great variety of exercise videos that allow you to fit exercise in any stage of life. Are you having a busy day? No problem, do this 10-minute workout video. Just had a baby? Enjoy this at-home post-pregnancy workout. Have no equipment? No worries, Kayla has a lot of equipment-free exercise videos.

(25,26)

## **Krissy Cela by Krissy Cela**

For intense weightlifting exercises, follow along with Krissy Cela's videos to build muscle and become your strongest self. Krissy offers a wide variety of exercises, from weight training to body weight workouts.

(27,28)

# **YOGA AND STRETCHING**

## **Yoga with Adriene by Adriene Mishler**

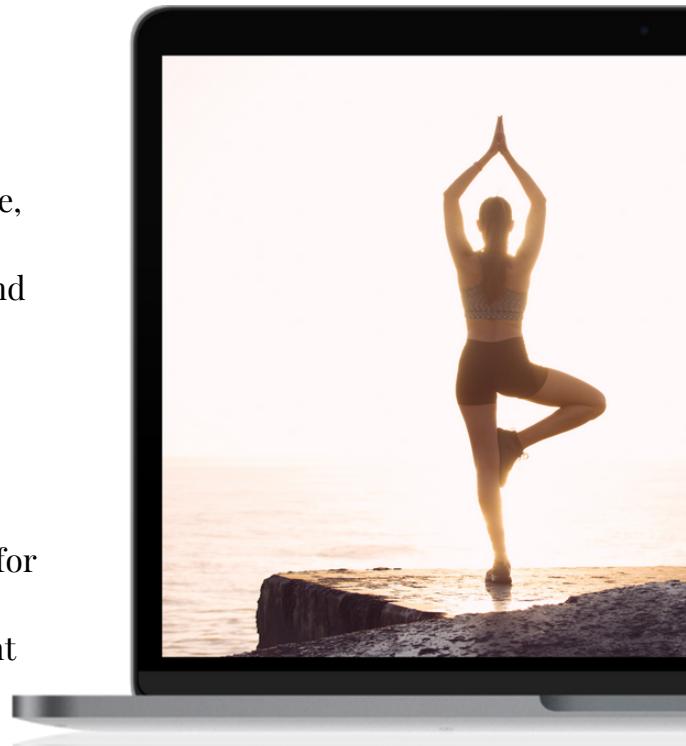
Adriene's channel has videos for you regardless of your age, abilities, level, or goals. Adriene offers yoga tutorials for flexibility, strength, mindfulness, different times of day, and even videos to help channel positive feelings or regulate negative ones.

(29,30)

## **Move with Nicole by Nicole McPherson**

Move with Nicole is the channel for you if you are looking for longer workouts in relaxing environments. Filming on the beach or at home, Nicole is able to bring a zen environment to you with low-intensity full-body yoga workouts.

(31,32)



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  32. Move With Nicole - YouTube [Internet]. [cited 2022 Aug 12]. Available from: <https://www.youtube.com/c/MoveWithNicole>

# DON'T HAVE FITNESS EQUIPMENT?

No worries! There are many items you have at home that can help you during your workout.

## 1. Weight alternatives

- Grab filled water bottles or canned goods to replace bumblebells and kettlebells!
- To increase your whole body weight, wear an object-filled backpack
- A large bag of rice or pet food can be used for weighted rep exercises

## 2. Use pantihose instead of resistance bands

## 3. For gliders, use a paper plate

## 4. Use a basketball instead of a medicine ball



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# HEALTHY MEAL PREP IDEAS FOR WORKING WOMEN AND BUSY MOMS

# BREAKFAST



A close-up photograph of a bowl filled with overnight oats. The oats are a light beige color and have a slightly chunky texture. A cluster of fresh, dark blue blueberries is placed on top of the oats, adding a vibrant color contrast. The bowl is white and sits against a plain, light-colored background.

# OVERNIGHT OATS

This dessert breakfast will leave you satisfied and full. Prepare it in minutes and ensure a great start to your day.

# Ingredients

## Base:

- ½ cup oats
- ½ milk of choice
- ¼ yogurt of choice
- 1 tablespoon sweetener of choice (ex. Honey, maple syrup, ...)

## Optional:

- Hemp and chia seeds

## Toppings:

Add nuts, seeds, and fruits of choice

## Our Topping Ideas

### A taste of childhood:

#### Strawberry Banana

- Walnuts
- Vanilla extract
- Diced strawberry
- Mashed banana

### Pb&J

- Homemade Mashed raspberry Puree
- Peanut butter
- Peanuts

### Fall in Cup

- Diced apple
- Pecan
- Cinnamon
- Maple syrup drizzle

## Instructions:

Add all the base ingredients in a jar and mix. Place in the fridge overnight and add prepared toppings in the morning for a crisp and frsh breakfast.

A collage of healthy smoothies and ingredients. In the foreground, there's a white bowl filled with granola, a red apple, and several raspberries. Behind the bowl, four glasses of smoothies are lined up: a yellow smoothie on the left, a red smoothie in the center, a green smoothie on the right, and another red smoothie partially visible on the far right. Each smoothie has a metal straw in it. The background is a blurred green, suggesting an outdoor setting.

# SMOOTHIE

Prepare a nutritious breakfast in minutes by tossing simple ingredients in the blender. Vitamin-rich and easy to make, what more can you ask for!

# Ingredients

## 1. Very Berry

- a.  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup almond milk
- b. 1 cup of fresh or frozen Blueberry, Strawberry and blackberry

## 2. Tropical Delight

- a.  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup coconut milk
- b. 1 banana
- c.  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup chopped pineapple
- d.  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup ditched mango

## 3. Green Bliss

- a.  $\frac{3}{4}$  oat milk
- b. 1 banana
- c.  $\frac{1}{2}$  spinach

## Sweetner options

For a healthy and sweet addition to your smoothie, avoid refined and artificale sweeteners.

Here are our recommendations:

- 2 dates
- Extra banana
- Honey
- Maple syrup

## Add Protein

Although you milk is packed with protein, feel free to give your smoothie an extra boost with the options below:

- Nut butter
- Flaxseed meal
- Oats
- Chias or hemp seeds
- Pumpkin or sunflower seeds
- Quinoa
- Yogurt

# Instructions

Add ingrediants to a blender, and blend. It is that easy!



# EGG MUFFIN

Egg muffin, or shall we say protein bites? This protein-packed breakfast will give you the energy you need to start your day.

# Ingredients

## Base:

- 1 egg
- Salt and pepper as needed

## Toppings

### 1. Veggie Bite

- a. Chopped spinach
- b. Diced tomato, pepper, and onion

### 2. Cheesy Muschroom

- a. Shredded cheese
- b. Ditched mushroom
- c. Chopped dill

### 3. Power Bite

- a. Shredded chicken
- b. Chopped onion
- c. Cayenne powder

# Instructions

Wisk the egg, and add to them your desired toppings. Put oil or butter in a cupcake pan and add egg mixture. Place in the oven until golden.

# LUNCH





# CHICKEN QUINOA BOWL

A large white bowl filled with a colorful meal prep dish. It contains quinoa, shredded chicken, black beans, corn, red cabbage, red onion, jalapeno (optional), and cilantro. A wooden spoon rests in the bowl. In the background, there are smaller bowls containing more ingredients like olives and lime wedges.

It's fun, filling, and delicious! This protein and nutrient-packed lunch will keep you pushing through the rest of your day with no problems.

# Ingredients

- 1 chicken breast
- BBQ sauce and Ranch (low sugar and sodium versions)
- **¼ cup Quinoa**
- **¼ cup black beans**
- **Red cabbage**
- **Sweet corn**
- **Red onion**
- **Jalapeno (optional)**
- **Avocado**

Bolded ingredients don't have an amount because it is preference based!

# Instructions

## Chicken breast:

- Marinate your chicken breast in BBQ sauce and your preferred seasoning for at least 1 hour.
- Grill your chicken breast over medium heat for at least 6 minutes on each side.
- Allow the chicken to sit for 5 minutes to retain moisture then you can dice, cube, or cut the chicken breast into strips.

## Quinoa:

- Bring water to a boil.
- Place quinoa and water in a 1:2 ratio in the boiling water.
- Reduce heat to low and let it simmer for around 15 minutes.
- Remove from the heat and let it stand for another 5-10 minutes until all the quinoa expands.

## Finally:

- Season your beans with your preferred seasoning.
- Cut all of your vegetables into your desired size (finely chopped is what's recommended)
- Add everything to a bowl and drizzle ranch (or any sauce of your choosing)
- Garnish with scallions or chopped cilantro.

# HEARTY VEGETABLE SOUP





It's comforting, heartwarming, and, most importantly, extremely tasty! Try this Hearty Vegetable soup that's perfect for a windy night, or really anytime; you won't regret it!

## Ingredients

- 1 1/2 Carrots
- 2 Celery Sticks
- 1 Potatoe
- 1 Red Onion
- Tomatoes and tomato sauce
- Corn (optional)
- Green beans (optional)
- 2 cloves of Garlic
- Ground beef (optional)
- Balsamic vinegar to taste

## Instructions

### Meat and Veggies:

- Heat oil over medium heat in a pot.
- Add your onions and garlic and cook for 2 minutes
- Stir in the ground beef and cook until it's browned (drain the remaining fat).
- Once the beef is browned, add in all of your vegetables, tomato sauce and water, and bring them to a simmer.
- Add your desired seasonings, then let it simmer for 30 - 45 more minutes until all the vegetables are tender.

### Finally:

- Taste the soup and adjust the seasoning to your preference.
- Garnish with scallions or cilantro.



# GREEK CHICKEN WRAPS

They are flavourful, filling, and very easy to make! Try these Greek chicken wraps, perfect for when you are hungry and low on time.

# Ingredients

- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
- Kalamata olives
- Crumbled feta cheese
- 1 lemon
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh oregano
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 cup of shredded skinless, boneless rotisserie chicken breast
- 1 chopped cucumber
- Hummus (optional)
- Whole-wheat flour tortillas



# Instructions

Place tomatoes, olives, feta, lemon juice, oregano, oil, black pepper, chicken, and cucumber in a large bowl. Then toss to combine until satisfied. Next, you can optionally spread 1 tablespoon of hummus over 1 side of each tortilla (adjust for preference). Finally, Top each tortilla with about 1/2 cup of chicken mixture, and roll up wraps. Cut in half and enjoy!

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