



I COOK YOU SERVE
Homemade, Wholesome, Meaningful

How to make TEN portions of fruit and veg part of your day to day eating habits

We all know that getting fruit and veg into what you eat is incredibly important.

Eating fruit and veg will make a huge difference to your:

- Mental health
- Emotional health
- Physical health

Your body is positively impacted not only at cellular level, but you can also target specific organs, alongside overall good health and keeping everything running smoothly.

So, what do 10 fruit and veg portions a day look like?

Well, an average portion is 80 grams. But you can't just have three apples and two pears and think that you've hit 5 a day. They must be different fruits and vegetables, think about the colours of a rainbow and Eat the Rainbow.

The other big consideration is to eat more vegetables than fruit. If you're aiming for ten portions a day, make 6 or 7 of them a vegetable and the remaining 3 or 4 a fruit.



Let's get Started

Meal Planning

This is the most important place to start, for several reasons.

When you have planned what you're going to eat, you will look at what you've got already and will then know what you need to buy. When you know what you need to buy you have **The List**.

The list will help you to:

- Ensure you remember everything you need – there's nothing worse than forgetting an ingredient when you get your cook on.
- The list keeps you focused and therefore less likely to be drawn into an impulse buy – we've all been there. But you don't need to throw things into your shopping basket anymore, you've got a list, if it isn't on the list, you don't need it.
- By sticking to your list, you can go shopping with a rough budget, this too will help keep the total price down.

Price

A common misconception when it comes to eating more fruit and veg is that your weekly shop will become more expensive. But here are some tips to help you, keep your total basket price down.

- Shop around, it sounds basic, but we're all creatures of habit, go to a new shop and see how the prices change.
- Go to local fruit and veg stands. In Northampton we are incredibly lucky to have several fruits and veg stalls in our town market and fantastic farm shops, we would strongly recommend giving them a go. A bonus of eating 10 fruit and veg a day, could be that you become more involved in your community. When you're at a fruit and veg stall, you're talking to real people rather than a supermarket corporation. People need people, share a smile ask what's in season and what's going out of season soon.
- Check out local allotments see if they are selling surplus fruit or vegetables or even seeds.
- Shop seasonally, again, this sounds basic, but it is something that people just aren't doing. Yes, you can buy strawberries all year round, but when they come into season between May and September, they are simply beautiful. You're buying a product at its very best, and often at a better price with less packaging and less plastic is fantastic. When strawberries go out of season, look at what is in season and let yourself enjoy a wider selection of ingredients throughout the year.



Flavours

I love fruit and veg but don't get me wrong, I know there are only so many ways you can cut and cook a cauliflower. My secret weapon for this is seasoning and I'm not talking salt and pepper! Next time you go shopping, go to the herbs and spices section, stop walking, open your eyes, have a good look, like a really good look. You may be surprised just how many there are, and you may remember how many of them you enjoy. We all get into a food rut so using different herbs and spices can make a big difference your everyday ingredients. Most vegetables are like big sponges that will take on the taste of whatever herb or spice you give it. Have you tried putting sage with butternut squash? It's delicious!

Do some research check out recipes for flavour combinations. Is there a culture of food that you already enjoy? Follow up and see if what flavour combinations they use and chuck it on the vegetables you're working with. This is another great way to combine planning and a search for new-to-you flavours.



Frozen fruit and veg

Our mantra is fresh is best, but we recognise it's not always that simple. Many vegetables need blanching before freezing if you're freezing individual ingredients, but if you cook a batch of Ratatouille for example it copes very well with being frozen.

There's a great selection of frozen fruit and veg available to us. Buying frozen can make it easier for those that don't want to spend their time chopping, cutting, peeling vegetables. For some veg prep can be like meditation for others, it can be completely mind numbingly boring. Do what you need to do, just make sure you're getting your fruit and veg into your meals.

Personally, I don't mind veg prep, apart from butternut squash. I am not a big fan of cutting up butternut squash, so I was really pleased to see that there were some frozen butternut squash pieces, ready for me to roast, whizz into soup, enjoy in curries and other dishes I enjoy.

10 a day breakfast – breakfast toppings

Most important meal of the day, or so we're told. Whether you are a cereal, toast, or fried breakfast eater, getting a couple of portions of fruit a veg into your breakfast is a great way to start your day. Your body will thank you for it and you will be well on your way to 10 a day.



Porridge

Include fruit into the mix when preparing your porridge. Apples give a nice crunch and with a drizzle of maple syrup or honey and a cinnamon hit you won't need to add sugar. I would also recommend berries, especially blue berries a personal favourite because they are packed with antioxidants. Add toppings from coconut shavings to nuts and seeds, they won't massively impact the taste and if you aren't a fan of the texture of nuts and seeds, use a grounded nut and seed mix and still smile as you're looking after your body.

Side Note

Nuts and seeds are nutritional powerhouses and have been eaten by humans for millions of years for good reason. Sprinkle them on and include them into what you eat.

Side Note

Jam does not count as a fruit portion.

Toast

Can be topped with avocado, I would recommend seasoning your avocado well, for me it's all about the spice.



Smoothies are not just for summer and not just for the weekend

You took your list and now you have all the ingredients you need so get your chopping board out and have fun see how many fruits and veg portions you can get into each smoothie.

- Firstly, yes – fruit and veg! Spinach, kale, peas, cauliflower, broccoli, the veg police won't arrest you for having them for breakfast, the veg police only hand out high fives. Fact. These vegetables don't have super strong flavours, apart from the impact on the colour, you probably wouldn't even notice that your smoothie is full of fruit and veg. Our tip - drink from a cup that isn't see through.
- I often use frozen fruit for my smoothies as fresh fruit is a favourite snack in this house. Of course, you can use fresh or a mixture of both fresh and frozen.
- Most smoothies are made with a liquid, some people use water, many use milk or fruit juice but are you ready for a true nutritional gift of gold? When making your smoothies use a fruit or green tea. Now stay with me, for those of you who don't like fruit/green tea, the flavours of the fruit will 100% cover the tea flavour. So why use it? Well, fruit juices are super high in sugar which just undoes all the nutritional value you are getting from the fruit and veg. Many fruit and green teas are literally overflowing with antioxidants. Some of your noses may be wrinkling at the thought of having fruit or green tea in your smoothies. However, the flavours of the fruits and veg that you have in the smoothie will cover the flavour of the green or fruit tea, but you still get all the health benefits.



Side Note

It is important to be proactive, be open to trying new foods. I often encourage my clients to look beyond the ingredients and to consider the health benefits that a food will bring them. This is your food, you can change the texture or flavour of an ingredient without compromising the nutrition of it, be open minded and give it a try.

Soups - Where you do sit on the soup debate?

Where you do sit on the soup debate?

Some say it's boring and just for old people! I think they just haven't found the soup for them. Don't tell the many athletes on my client list that my chicken noodle soup with 38 grams of protein is just for old people.

Soups can be eaten as a lunch or a side, is also a healthier option for a late-night snack. You can pretty much add anything, either using what is best in season or what's lurking at the back of your fridge and bottom of your veg basket. You can pretty much any vegetable into a soup and therefore into your body giving you a wide variety of vitamins and minerals.



Side Note

Try a summer soup with cucumber, lettuce and peas.

Do you know what fruit and veg you like?

I have left this question until now because as you were reading the above you would have been considering the fruit and veg that you know you enjoy. Write these down, these will be your go-to fruit and veg. They're probably the fruit and veg you are most confident in how to prepare and in what other people ingredients to cook them with, how to flavour etc.

These lists will be different for everyone, it may be interesting to compare your go-to fruits and veg list with others in your household. We each have a different experience of fruit and veg, some may like the sharpness that lemons and limes bring to a dish, some may think that lemons and limes only belong in dessert, yet others may feel lemons and limes should only be in drinks. We're all different, we all have different likes and dislikes, let's celebrate this, talk, and most importantly eat. Try new ingredients, new recipes, old recipes, holiday favourites, childhood favourites and fails. Along with the huge amount of fruit and veg that is available to you, your taste buds change and can be trained over time.





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Hopefully the above list will help you to be well on your way to 10 a day, if you have any questions or would like any further support with your eating habits, please get in touch.

Please get in touch

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