

Lunchbox Ideas

Regardless of how old you are, it only takes a moment to remember what it was like to go through the routine of getting ready for school. A big part of that process was packing your lunchbox because if you accidentally forgot that (which I did on occasion) then your day was definitely below par. As a kid it was pretty tough to maintain those energy levels on little or no food and it's really no different as an adult. Quite often when I am educating workplaces and their teams on how to choose healthy food and give them tips on managing their energy levels, organisation and thinking ahead are some of the key components. For this to happen like a well-oiled machine, there are a couple of logistical steps to take the night before.



- ✦ Have one or several containers that you can use to store your lunch and snacks. You will also need a bag that is big enough to carry your food to work. It doesn't need to be huge.
- ✦ When you are choosing a meal to cook for dinner, double the recipe and instantly you have lunch for the next day plus some extra to store in the freezer for later. Everyone loves leftovers!
- ✦ When you are preparing your salad or vegetables for your evening meal, have a container at the ready and just make an extra serve for the next day.
- ✦ Pack your workbag before you go to bed leaving minimal preparation for the morning when you are rushing around getting ready and dramatically reduce your stress levels. The same thing you used to do for school right?

Simple Lunch Ideas to Bring to Work

1. The Simple Sandwich – No-one likes a soggy sandwich! To avoid an unappetising lunch, simply store the sandwich ingredients in a separate container to the bread and assemble when you are ready. Use a mixture of breads such as sliced, rolls or wraps and choose wholegrain, wholemeal or chia seed enriched for a boost of fibre. No need to spread with butter or margarine. Tasty healthy fillings include: lean ham, sliced tomato and reduced fat cheese, smoked salmon and low fat cream cheese, sliced chicken with salad leaves and a light spread of low fat mayonnaise, grated reduced fat cheese topped with baby spinach leaves, sliced turkey breast topped with avocado, tuna mixed with low fat mayonnaise, finely diced red onion and flat leaf parsley.



2. If a sandwich doesn't appeal, try a big colourful salad with leaves, cherry tomatoes, cucumber, crunchy sprouts and sliced red capsicum topped with an egg or a small tin of tuna or tin of 4 bean mix and a slice of grainy bread. Make the salad the night before and add the protein and bread at lunchtime.
3. Anything left? – If you loved your dinner the night before there is nothing better than enjoying it again the next day. Just make sure that you have some protein in the form of meat, chicken or fish, some carbohydrate like rice or pasta and some vegetables or salad. Cooking an extra portion the night before is an easy and cost effective way of ensuring your lunch is organised.
4. Something hot – Enjoy soup or a hot lunch that can be quickly whipped up in the office kitchen. Why not try:
 - Home-made or prepared soups (without added cream or salt) plus a wholegrain roll.
 - A small tin of baked beans (or any other tinned legume) or small tin of tuna combined with a single serve pouch of brown rice or noodles (90 seconds in the microwave) and your favourite frozen vegetable.
 - A couple of slices of wholegrain toast topped with a handful of baby spinach leaves and a small tin of baked beans

If you start to think about getting ready for your workday just like a school day way back when, your food and energy levels will be on track for the day and you save money and precious time.