Visit the Teladoc Medical Experts website for more information

As the seasons begin to shift, it's a great time to reflect, reset, and try something new. For September, learn simple ways to feel more balanced—like using your natural strengths to support others, setting thoughtful goals for your wellbeing, and planning meals that work smarter, not harder. Whether you're caring for loved ones, focusing on your own health, or simply looking for ways to make life a little easier, small, thoughtful steps can lead to lasting change. And fall is the perfect time to begin.

Use your strengths to help others

What's your superpower?

We've all got something we're innately good at. Maybe you can balance a spoon on your nose. Perhaps you're a perfect parallel parker. Or maybe creating a lifelike animal out of balloons is your super skill.

These are all entertaining and possibly fun to share. It's the more complicated talents, like being a good listener or giver of advice, that seem to be more in demand.

Deploying your special skills

There are many skills you may have that others do not. Consider these ways to make a positive impact on others and your community:

Mentoring and teaching

If you have expertise in a particular area, consider mentoring or teaching others. Sharing your knowledge can help those who could benefit, grow and succeed.

Volunteering

Use your skills to support causes you care about. Help organize events. Provide technical or professional support. Even simple things like answering phone calls or shelving books at your local library can make a big difference.

Listening and supporting

Being a good listener and offering emotional support can be incredibly valuable. It is especially hard for some people to show vulnerability. Active listening, showing empathy, and understanding can help others feel heard and valued.

Problem-solving

If you're good at finding solutions, offer your help to friends and peers. Your ability to think critically and creatively could provide new perspectives and strategies.

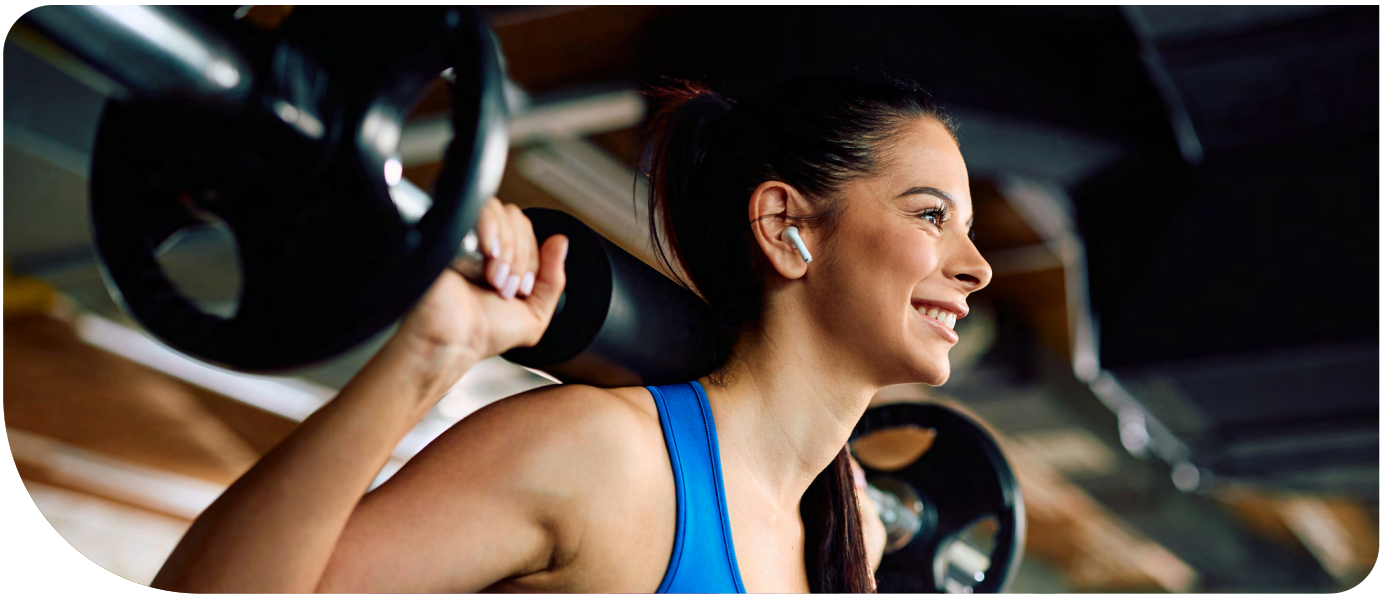
Networking

Use your connections to help find jobs, collaboration, or sharing resources a friend may need. Your network can be a powerful tool for supporting others.

Advocacy

If you're passionate about a cause, use your voice to advocate for change. Raising awareness and mobilizing others can lead to meaningful improvements your community could benefit from.

Challenge yourself: Reflect on your superpowers and decide which you can use to best help others.



Kick it up: Setting goals for physical and mental fitness

Everyone wants to live their best, most healthy life, but sometimes it's easier said than done.

Setting and reaching goals requires an awareness of yourself and your habits. Once you decide to address your health, you'll start a journey that begins with adjusting expectations based on what works for you. Develop a routine and find a balance between what you have to do and what you can do. Above all, believe in yourself.

Along this journey, you may stumble or face setbacks, but don't let up. Count your wins and be your own inspiration. You're gathering momentum to become your healthiest you. Recommit to reaching your health goals by finding your inner strength.

If you need to refine your goals for the year, set yourself up for success by making your physical and mental fitness goals **SMART**:[1]

Specific

Make your goal as detailed as possible. Write a full description of what you want to achieve and what you're going to do to get there. The more specific your description, the better chance you'll have at reaching your goal. A loose, vague goal might sound like: I will lose weight. A specific goal sounds like: **I will lose 10 pounds by avoiding sugary drinks and snacks and jogging for 20 minutes three days a week.**

Measurable

This means there is a way to monitor progress. It might be a number that changes up or down, depending on what success looks like. Or it might be a visible, physical change. Example: **I'll use my fitness tracker to record my activity each day. I'll look back at my tracking to see if I stuck to my goal.**

Achievable

Your goal should be a challenge but realistic for your current state of physical and mental health. Your goal should include steps to reach what you desire more easily. Example: **I will take time for myself by writing in my journal for five minutes at least three times each week.**

Relevant

Why is this goal important to you? Will achieving it help improve your health or wellbeing? Make sure your goal is worthwhile so you're more likely to stick with it. Example: **Improving my fitness will make me feel better about myself. It will positively affect my health and allow me to do more things I enjoy.**

Time-bound

Set a start date and deadline for your goal. If you need to adjust them, it's OK to be flexible. With a time frame, you can visualize the finish line for your goal. Example: **I'll do activities that help me lose one pound a week for 10 weeks. After 10 weeks, I'll look at my progress and see if I've met my goal.**

Don't let up on being your best, most healthy self. With some strategic planning and a step-by-step approach to motivation, you'll make it.

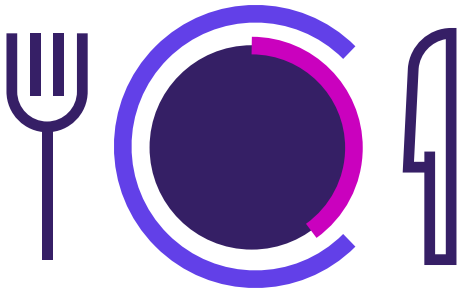
[1]https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/environmental-funding/tools-for-applying.html

Flex your meal-planning muscles: Hacks to save time and money

Let's face it. Planning a week's worth of breakfasts, lunches and dinners for yourself or your family can be a challenge. If you don't plan, however, you often end up making the same thing over and over. Or worse, you rely on less healthy options to fill your needs.

The solution is finding meals that are quick, healthy and won't break the bank.

63%
of the food Canadians throw away could have been eaten.[1]



140 kg
of food is wasted by the average Canadian household per year — worth over $1,300.[2]

Start your day right

Breakfast seems like an easy fix. But ready-to-eat options like cereal, muffins and pastries can be highly processed with added sugar and laden with saturated fats. When you prioritize protein first thing in the morning, you'll feel fuller longer.

Consider these protein-packed options:

- Hard-boiled eggs
- Greek yogurt cups
- Premade whole-grain pancakes wrapped around a turkey sausage, taco-style
- Egg casserole or roasted pepper and egg cups (read on for recipe)

Fill up the middle

Lunch keeps you going. It's the perfect time for more protein, good fats and vegetables. Look in your fridge–leftovers could offer excellent options for repurposing.

These dinner leftovers make great lunches like:

Tacos or burritos. Wrap up leftover meat or chicken with salsa and cheese.

Pasta. Leftover pasta usually has more flavour and reheats easily.

Chopped salad. Chop your leftover roasted veggies, and add lettuce, beans/protein and nuts/seeds for a balanced lunch.

Make dinners do double (or triple) duty

With the right planning, your dinner entrees could give back in multiple ways. Think about how you can repurpose meals before you even start cooking.

For example:

- A roast chicken dinner can be repurposed into white bean chicken chili (using meat and veggies) later in the week.
- Leftover meatloaf can be chopped and layered between noodles, cheese and tomato sauce for lasagna.
- Roast pork or beef can be chopped with cubed potatoes and sauteed into a hash.
- Almost any meat and veggie combo can be repurposed into a wrap (roll a whole wheat tortilla with hummus and leftovers), shepherd's pie (chop, mix, cover with mashed potatoes and bake until browned) or even stir fry (chop and sauté with cooked rice, an egg and your favourite Asian-inspired bottled sauce).

Looking at the potential of each ingredient in a new and creative way will open the door to many alternative, and possibly scrumptious, meals.

Roasted pepper and egg cups

Makes: 6 servings | Prep: 15 mins | Total: 40 mins

These delicious egg cups can be made on the weekend and reheated for on-the-go breakfasts all week.

Ingredients

- Cooking spray
- ½ Tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 onion (yellow preferred), finely chopped
- 6 medium red, yellow or orange bell peppers
- 1 8-oz package white mushrooms, sliced
- 1 6.4-oz package frozen, cooked, nitrate-free turkey sausage links, thawed
- 6 eggs (or 1¾ cup liquid egg substitute)
- ¼ cup fat-free or 1% milk
- ¼ tsp pepper
- 1 cup shredded reduced-fat (2%) cheddar cheese

Preparation

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Lightly spray a 6-cup muffin pan with cooking spray.
Slice the tops off the peppers. Scoop out the insides (seeds and membranes) to make a cup. Place in the muffin pan.
In a medium nonstick pan, heat the oil over medium-high heat. Cook the onions and mushrooms for 10 minutes or until soft, stirring occasionally.
Meanwhile, warm the turkey sausage according to package directions. Chop the sausage into bite-size pieces. Stir into the onion mixture until well-blended. Spoon into the pepper cups.
In a small bowl, whisk together the eggs, milk and pepper. Pour the egg mixture into the pepper cups. Top each pepper evenly with the cheddar.
Bake for 25 minutes or until the eggs are set. Remove from the oven. Let cool slightly. Remove the cups from the pan and serve immediately. Or, completely cool and store in the refrigerator or freezer to be heated up as needed.

Nutrition

Serving size: 1 filled pepper

Calories: 267 | total fat: 13 g | saturated fat: 4 g | sodium: 401 mg | cholesterol: 228 mg
total carbs: 16 g | fibre: 5 g | sugars: 9 g | protein: 38 g | potassium: 685 mg

Sheet pan chicken and brussels sprouts

Makes: 6 servings | Prep: 15 mins | Total: 1 hour

Using one pan to make dinner makes prep and cleanup simple. Plus, the flavours mingle for extra deliciousness in every bite. Double the recipe to use leftovers in sandwiches or chopped up on salad or rice bowls.

Ingredients

- 2 cups brussels sprouts, halved
- 1 red apple cut into slices
- 1 (4 oz) package ham (cubed or sliced)
- 2 Tbsps olive oil, divided
- 1 tsp minced fresh rosemary (or your favourite herb)
- 6 skinless, boneless chicken thighs
- Salt and ground black pepper to taste

Preparation

Preheat the oven to 425°F. Toss brussels sprouts, apple and ham with 1 Tbsp olive oil and rosemary in a bowl. Spread into a single layer on a parchment paper-lined sheet pan.

Toss chicken with the remaining 1 Tbsp oil in the same bowl. Nestle the chicken in the vegetables on the sheet pan. Sprinkle salt and pepper on top. Bake in the preheated oven, stirring the brussels sprouts mixture every 15 minutes, until chicken is no longer pink in the centre and the juices run clear, 40 to 45 minutes. An instant-read thermometer inserted into the centre should read at least 165°F.

Nutrition

Serving size: 1 piece of chicken, ½ cup vegetables

Calories: 212 | total fat: 24 g | saturated fat: 7 g | sodium: 420 mg | cholesterol: 150 mg
total carbs: 8 g | fibre: 2 g | sugars: 3 g | protein: 30 g | potassium: 450 mg

[1]https://lovefoodhatewaste.ca/about/food-waste
[2]https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/managing-reducing-waste/food-loss-waste.html

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Dr. Karolina Filipowska
CAN Deputy Medical Director
Teladoc Health Canada, Inc

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