

Balance Your World

Healthy Focused People
Attaining Sustainable Results.

with Lynn Fraser

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8 Easy Steps To Almost Automatic Dinners

By Lynn Fraser, The Practical Life Balance Expert

I LOVE my dishwasher. No, I don't mean like. I loooooove my dishwasher! When my husband and I were first married we lived in a one bedroom apartment overlooking the back wall of a car dealership. Noisy, boring view, a sauna in the summer and NO DISHWASHER! (Yes, I married him for love, not money!)

When we purchased our first home three years later you'd better believe it had a dishwasher! Even though it was old, noisy and baked on anything sticky, it was a step up from hand-washing!!

A few years ago when my old dishwasher broke down I was delighted to find a Maytag washer with an Auto Clean feature. It senses how dirty the dishes are and adjusts the cycle length and setting accordingly. Quiet, water and energy-saving and a stress-buster to boot!

Do You Need An "Auto -sensor cycle" for Meal Planning?

Don't you wish you could load your dishwasher with the ingredients and have a meal come out at the end of the cycle that suits you and your family perfectly? What if you could do it in 8 easy steps? Interested???

8 steps To "Almost" Automatic Meal Planning:

1. Set your timer for 30 minutes so you know when this task starts AND ends.
2. Pick 5 of your favorite dinner recipes.
3. Check your cupboards, fridge and freezer for what you already have on hand.

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4. Write a grocery list based on your favorite grocery store lay-out. List the meat, dairy and frozen foods last on your list so they stay cold. DING! Your 30 minutes is up and you're ready to go shopping.
5. FOLLOW YOUR LIST WHEN IN THE STORE! Don't impulse-buy unless it's for something you would normally buy that's on sale and you can use up before the best-before date.
6. When you get home, put the perishable items in the fridge and freezer right away. Brown ground meat while you're putting away the rest of the groceries. Slice, portion, bag and label meat for your recipes for the week. Refrigerate enough for three days; freeze the remainder.
7. Set out your first dinner recipe on the counter. Put out the non-perishable items (ie: spices, soup tins, pasta) and equipment you need.

The next day...

8. When you get home from work, don't change out of your work clothes! Slip on an apron, put on the timer and get dinner started! You'll be amazed at how automatic this becomes. AND how delicious!

While your dishwasher is humming along taking care of the dishes, you can plan, shop, prepare and store the food you need for a week's worth of meals! If you follow the 8 easy steps to almost automatic meal planning starting **THIS WEEK**, you will have a clearer focus at work, cut down on frantic runs to the grocery store and eliminate phone calls to numbers with 7's and 3's in them. PLUS you'll make healthier choices for yourself and your family. I can just feel your stress plummeting. How easy was that?

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About the author: Lynn Fraser, The Practical Life Balance Expert, invites individuals within businesses and families to wholeheartedly lead enjoyable, healthy & focused lives. Visit her website at www.lynnfraser.ca

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