

MIND Diet Meal Timing Schedule Activity

If you'd like to set up a schedule of times for daily eating that is customized for you, try the activity below. Remember to pay attention to what feels right without convincing yourself that you will "make it work." It's possible to be motivated to make new changes and continue to honor your most important daily tasks. We recommend making a schedule that is as closely aligned to your usual daily patterns as possible. Here are suggestions that can and should be modified to fit your own lifestyle:

ACTIVITY:
Meal Timing Schedule

INSTRUCTIONS: **Step 1)** Determine the best time for your breakfast based on the last meal you had the day before, the time you wake up, and your morning activity level. **Step 2)** Choose a time for lunch and aim for this to be your biggest meal. **Step 3)** Consider a mid-afternoon snack that combines carb + protein or healthy fat. **Step 4)** Choose a time for dinner that fits with your daily routine. **Step 5)** Leave 2 hours before bed without eating. If snacking after dinner, consider skipping the carb and combining veggies + protein or healthy fat. **Step 6)** Aim for target bedtime at the same time each night.

Step 1: Determine the best time for breakfast. Space the last eating occasion of the previous day (i.e., dinner or evening snack) roughly 12-14 hours before the first eating occasion the next day (i.e., breakfast). For example, if you typically eat dinner at 6pm and you're done eating by 7pm, then it would be reasonable to schedule breakfast anytime between 7am and 9am. However, if you're someone who wakes up at 6am and you engage in high-intensity exercise in the morning, it may not be a good idea to wait until 9am to refuel after your workout. You may

need to push up the time for breakfast or have a snack that can fuel your workout before breakfast. See example below:

Final eating time day before: ___7:00pm___

Wake time: ___6:00am___ *8oz water here*

Breakfast (Aim for 12-14 hours after final eating time day before)

Time: ___9:00am___

Step 2: Choose a time for lunch. If you don't typically eat lunch, try to choose a time within 4-5 hours after breakfast. Remember that the research supports consuming a greater portion of your calorie intake earlier in the day for best weight loss and heart health results. This is your opportunity to consider eating a slightly larger lunch and planning a smaller dinner. You might choose this as one of your small changes if breakfast is already a habit. Example:

Lunch *8oz water here*

Time: ___1:00pm___

Step 3: Consider a mid-afternoon snack. The American Heart Association's guidelines for meal timing include strategically placing snacks before meals at which you tend to overeat. For most of us, that's dinner. That's why we highly recommend a balanced afternoon snack consisting of quality carbohydrates to keep energy going along with a lean protein or healthy fat. This is also a great time to sneak in some MIND foods you may not typically get with meals or may find it hard to get enough, such as berries, nuts, EVOO, or whole grains. Example:

Snack 8oz water here

Time: ____3:00pm ____

Step 4: Choose a time for dinner. Try to preserve as much of your usual routine as possible. If you are used to eating dinner at 9:00 every night, don't schedule it at 5:00, just because you think you "should" eat earlier. It's okay if it isn't perfect. Just do your best. If you're a late-night eater, then perhaps your small change should be to push dinner up by one or two hours. You may find that you are not as hungry late at night if you begin to eat a larger amount earlier in the day. Example:

Dinner 8oz water here

Time: ____6:00pm ____

Step 5: Leave 2 hours before bed without eating. Fill in with a snack, if desired. Research shows that late-night eating is harmful for the brain, heart, and weight status. Fatigue, stress, momentum of continuation from a previous meal or snack, watching TV... these are all fuel for an overeating fire. The best option is to abstain. If you do choose to eat a snack, it may be best for weight loss to skip the carbs, since we don't need a lot of energy before bed. A good evening snack combination could be veggies plus lean protein or healthy fat. See below for MIND-friendly low-carb snack combos:

- ½ cup celery and/or baby carrot sticks + 2 Tbsp nut butter (1 OV + 1 Nut)
 - Optional: sprinkle with a dash of cinnamon and/or sea salt
- 1 whole grain rice cake, Wasa cracker, or Norwegian crispbread + 2 Tbsp hummus (1 WG + ½ Bn)
 - Optional: add fresh cucumber and tomato slices + squeeze fresh lemon juice and sprinkle of fresh or dried dill (add 1 OV)
- Roasted Kale Chips (1 LG, 0.5 EVOO; page 297 of [The Official MIND Diet](#))
- 1 sliced tomato + ½ cup low fat cottage cheese (1-2 OV)
 - Optional: sprinkle with oregano, pepper, and a dash of sea salt.

Snack (Optional) 8oz water here

Time: ____ 8:00pm ____

Step 6: Aim for a target bedtime. If weight loss is a goal for you and you're having trouble, you may want to investigate your sleep habits. Weight loss is a lot more than just "calories in/calories out." You could follow every recommendation in this book to a T, but if your sleep patterns are disrupted and hormones are imbalanced, this could be blocking your ability to lose weight. This could be another nominee for small change in the [6-Week Program](#) if sleep is something that you would like to improve. Example:

Bedtime

Time: ____10:00pm ____

Your schedule will no doubt adjust from day to day but try to establish basic routines with food so that your body can function optimally. Once you've created a meal-timing schedule, test it out for a week or two to see how it fits into your life and routine. Pay attention to any small adjustments that might be needed and to how you're feeling along the way.

Here is a template you can use to create your own MIND Diet Meal Timing Schedule.

MIND Diet Meal Timing Schedule

Step 1: Determine the best time for breakfast.	Final eating time day before: _____ Wake time: _____ 8oz water here Breakfast (Aim for 12-14 hours after final eating time day before) Time: _____
Step 2: Choose a time for lunch.	Lunch 8oz water here Time: _____
Step 3: Consider a mid-afternoon snack.	Snack 8oz water here Time: _____
Step 4: Choose a time for dinner.	Dinner 8oz water here Time: _____
Step 5: Leave 2 hours before bed without eating. Fill in with a snack, if desired.	Snack (Optional) 8oz water here Time: _____
Step 6: Aim for a target bedtime.	Bedtime Time: _____