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# Nutrition Matters: Five Tips For Healthy Eating For One



When popular culture conjures up us poor singletons in the act of eating alone, stereotypes abound. Boys, egged on by Paris Hilton, sit behind the wheel and sloppily consume 10,000 calorie meals from fast food joints. Girls lay about in their pajamas eating pints of ice cream or bowls of cereal for dinner bathed in the warm glow of their television.

On television about the only image of healthy eating for single women seems to be dessert-flavored yogurt.

The biggest obstacle to eating healthy for one is that cooking is the best route and, unless you are a big fan of eating the same leftovers night after night, it can be difficult to develop a varied set of recipes that are easy to make in single size portions. That is of course if you cook and if you have the time and space to cook.

When I was in the corporate world I sometimes worked as many as 90 hours a week in the office. When I came home I was in no mood to whip up a healthy balanced dinner. Thirty minutes was far too many - three minutes was more my speed. If it couldn't be microwaved or simply removed from the fridge and eaten cold it wasn't on my menu.

If there was time to head over to Whole Foods or some other upscale grocery store with gobs of prepared food, I could get reasonably healthy packaged meals that fit my I-have-no-time-to-cook criteria. That however is a very expensive option.

Then there is a question of where you live. When you are single in the city you don't need a ton of space and some options don't offer much in the way of cooking space. I lived briefly in Manhattan and my studio sublet offered a non-working stove and mini-fridge for a kitchen. I also just saw a notice for a room to rent which offered a "mature professional woman" everything she might need except her own kitchen, just kitchen privileges in the main house. Those privileges might not include 10 am breakfast making and 10 pm dinner times. So, how do you eat healthy on your own?

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*[NOTE: Some sentiments contained within "What We're Reading" articles may not strictly conform with PROJECT: PFC's nutritional outlook. We read articles containing opposing information all the time and derive our nutritional philosophies from the latest science, the opinions of experts worldwide and our anecdotal experiences in the field. We keep an open mind and a strong affinity for fact-based evidence to help make the world of nutrition "Simple Again" for you.]*

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So, how do you eat healthy on your own?

1. Learn how to cook if you don't know already.

Simply search "learn how to cook" and there are hordes of online resources ready and waiting to teach you. Video blogs are a great source of instruction. And there are shows on the Food Network that can help guide you.

## 2. Adapt to a small space.

I've seen quite a few blogs lately discussing how you can get by with a minimum of tools. While the enormous granite-clad kitchens housing massive commercial refrigerators and 6-8 burner professional stoves might be home to suburban families, singles might have bachelor pad sized digs with perhaps nothing more than a hot plate, microwave and mini-fridge. It can be done! Check out the recently launched "Tiny Kitchen" video series at the New York Times for observable proof.

## 3. Make your own packaged food

When you have a chunk of time, cook up some meals that can be frozen in individual servings ("s" foods, e.g. soups, stews, smoothies are good choices) and later defrosted, microwaved or heated in boiling water. I've heard raves about vacuum sealing as a helpful tool in this pursuit.

## 4. Learn how to cook for one.

Going Solo in the Kitchen by Jane Doefer is one of my all time favorite cookbooks. It's served as a reference in my kitchen for years. Eating Well magazine is one of my top choices for healthy recipes and they have reduced-size recipes both on their site and in cookbook form. North Dakota State University offers this resource guide including conversion charts for reducing recipes. There are also several blogs focused on solo cooking including Jennifer Trent Staves' Eating For One, Cooking For Two.

## 5. Make healthy choices

Spaghetti Carbonara is dead simple to make for one. Possibly even easier than making it for a crowd. Don't ask me how I know this. However, it is probably not the healthiest meal choices. It can be easy to fall back on a steady diet of pasta and other easy-to-cook-for-one choices that might not be the healthiest. You have to be strategic about what you can stock up on and what is better in single-serve sizes. If fresh fruits and vegetables go unused and go bad between grocery store visits it might be worth the premium to buy smaller, packaged sizes. If time is a premium, a stash of frozen vegetables or pre-cut, pre-washed lettuce can make the difference between getting your 5-to-7-a-day servings.

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