MEAL PATTERN: CREATE SOME STRUCTURE!

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As humans, we go about our lives each day - eating, drinking, and participating in various habits and rituals - often without thinking much about it. However, what we put into our bodies does matter as well as when; so it can be helpful to pause and think about the details of these choices and patterns.

FILL UP WITH FOOD LIKE YOU FILL UP YOUR GAS TANK

	A fuel source for cars is gasoline. We fill our gas tanks with the expectation that a full tank will last a while. After you fill up the tank, do you then stop at every gas station you pass to "top it off"? With a full tank of gas, most of us expect to drive our car until it is nearly empty.
	A fuel source for the body is food (and beverages). This is one big reason we eat; to bring fuel into our body which we can then burn for energy. Just as we expect a tank of gas to last until it is nearly empty, shouldn't we expect our meals to carry us to the next meal, without having to consume multiple snacks in between?

EXAMPLE MEAL PATTERNS USING THIS STRATEGY

Which pattern will work for you? It's ok if every day isn't the same. For example, you may have one pattern that works well on weekdays, and another for weekends. These patterns all include eating 2-3 times per day, without snacking and grazing in between. A small, healthy snack may be needed SOMETIMES, though, and that is ok!

Option 1	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
Option 2	First Meal	Optional Snack	Second Meal
Option 3	Small Meal	Lunch	Dinner

WHERE ARE YOU NOW? DOES YOUR FOOD LAST YOU FROM MEAL TO MEAL?

If the food that you currently eat at a meal cannot last you until the next meal, **this is what we need to work on first**. The goal is to **train your body** to expect just 2-3 meals per day, with little to no snacking. But there may be barriers to overcome.

Potential Barriers

- ☐ Current <u>habits and routines</u> that need to be reconstructed.
- ☐ <u>Food choices</u> that need to be upgraded.
- ☐ <u>Metabolic issues</u> that must be corrected.

We will talk about <u>strategies</u> for improving ALL of these things now that we have this concept in place:

Fuel up 2-3 times per day - and quit flooding the engine!

MEAL PLAN BUILDER – WORKSHEET

Use the steps below to create your personalized plan.

1. Create a <u>structure</u> for your plan.

Meals/Day	Snacks/Day	Eating Window	Total Daily Calories*
☐ 1	☐ 0	☐ 4 hours	☐ 1000 – Super Aggressive Weight Loss
☐ 2	☐ 1	☐ 6 hours	☐ 1200 – Aggressive Weight Loss
☐ 3	☐ 2	☐ 8 hours	☐ 1500 – Weight Loss
		☐ 10 hours	☐ 1800 – Weight Loss/Maintenance
		☐ 12 hours	☐ >2000 – Weight Maintenance

Calorie targets are ballpark figures and will vary based on gender, age, activity level and other factors.

2. Decide the <u>time frame</u> for your eating and fasting windows.

My eating window (most days) will be from _____ to _____.

My fasting window (most days) will be from _____ to _____.

3. <u>Distribute your calories</u> over the number of meals and snacks you have chosen.

_____ total calories per day (to be divided below)			
Meal #1	Meal #2	Meal #3	Snacks/Other

4. Now it's time to pick some meals to fit into your plan.

☐ Print out a copy of the "**Meal Plan Template**" to use.

☐ Consider what you already like to eat and how these options can fit into your plan.

☐ Go to the recipe section of the website and select a few options to try.

☐ Check out "**Julie's Example Meal Plan**" to see if any of these options could work for you.

☐ Get help from Julie (and others!) to brainstorm more options.

☐ As you go through your week, make notes on your **Meal Plan Template** about what worked or didn't work so well; you can use this for future reference!