

caring for you and *your budget*

The rising cost of living has had a major impact on how people shop, cook and eat. A recent Slimming World poll found that half of UK adults (51%) say spiralling costs have made it harder to make healthy food choices, and one in three (31%) say they prioritise the cost of food over how healthy it is.

We understand the extra toll this is having on midwives and other health workers, with the ongoing dispute over fair pay, and the additional unpaid hours that more than 85% of midwives surveyed said they work (RCM poll March 2024).

There is some good news though. It is possible to eat healthily and manage weight while looking after your finances. In a recent survey of Slimming World members, the majority (83%) agreed it's possible to lose weight on a budget. Previous research has also found that members of Slimming World don't spend any more on food than people who aren't trying to lose weight.

Slimming World members are savvy shoppers when it comes to eating healthily on a budget. Here's their eight top tips:



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1 prep ahead

Preparing meals and snacks when you do have time cuts costs, saves time in the long run, and ensures you always have a healthy option to hand – especially on the busiest of days. Members told us that they stock the freezer with batch-cooked **soups** and **sauc**es, **curries** and **chillis**, and make extra portions of grab-and-go recipes, like **breakfast egg muffins** to store in the fridge. As well as saving money on shop-bought convenience food, it helps ensure no food is thrown away. The future you will be grateful when there's a homecooked meal waiting for you on your break or after your shift.



2 love your list

Hitting the supermarket armed with a shopping list also ranks highly as a cost-saving strategy. Members say they plan their meals, make a list and stick to it – which helps them buy what they need and what they've budgeted for, and stay on track with their healthy eating. Other tactics include:

- Commit to doing a shop once a week
- Shop online... and avoid the temptation of those end of aisle offers
- Pay in cash – so you stick to the budget you've set yourself

3 use your freezer

Stock it with batch-cooked dishes to get ahead or freeze leftovers to avoid food waste. Big bags of frozen fruit and vegetables tend to be cheaper and are just as nutritious. They're quick and easy to add to meals or enjoy as a snack, eg defrosted frozen fruit with fat free yogurt.

All sorts of food can be frozen – from milk, bread, eggs, cheese, herbs and potatoes – and defrosted in just the right portion when you need it, getting the best value out of every penny.



4 buy own-brand products

If you don't already, swap from big brands to supermarket own-brand products, including 'essentials' ranges. Members tell us that it helps them cut costs, and they taste just as good! Tinned food like mackerel, chopped tomatoes, chickpeas and kidney beans are all great to have in to whip up quick, healthy meals in minutes, such as a **speedy pasta sauce** with tinned tomatoes – perfect for feeding you and your family after a busy work day.



5 save energy

With rising energy bills, we've all been paying more attention to which appliances use the most power. Members share their savvy ways to save each week in group – from ensuring the oven is full when it's on (another win for batch cooking), or using microwaves, slow cookers and air fryers (which use much less energy compared to an oven).



6 bulk out meals

Adding cheaper, more filling ingredients to meals to bulk them out can help cut costs while providing nutritious, comforting meals. Those bulky ingredients often bring extra health benefits too. For example, members make lean mince go further by adding red lentils and diced root veg to a Bolognese sauce or add mashed butternut squash or sweet potato to beef mince when making homemade burgers – it's cheaper, it gets you closer to your 5 a day, and tastes great too!



7 shop smarter

Opting for tinned and frozen veg, selecting seasonal fresh produce and looking out for wonky veg (which never look that wonky to us!) are all great ways to cut costs without compromising on the healthfulness of your weekly shop. Buying from local markets can also be more economical.



8 bag the best offers

Shopping in the evening when items are reduced, or making the most of supermarket loyalty card discounts and cashback voucher schemes can help you reap the benefits. Be wary of those tempting yellow labels... we've all been there, with a fridge full of things we didn't want or need (and sometimes they aren't the healthy options we'd planned for!).

For healthy,
budget-friendly
recipes, visit
[slimmingworld.
co.uk](http://slimmingworld.co.uk)



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