

“Help me get healthy on a budget!”

From wallet-friendly strategies for fitting healthier foods into your diet to no-gym-needed ways to exercise, our experts share the best ways to boost your health without busting your budget!

1 Eat healthy on the cheap!

Tap “triple-taskers”!

A great way to stretch your grocery budget is to focus on “flexible” foods that you can use several ways. One that fits the bill perfectly is hummus. “Use it as a healthy dip or a condiment instead of fattier mayo, or stir it into pasta sauce to make it creamier,” says dietitian Keri Gans. Another flexible food: Eggs! “Everyone shopping on a budget should have eggs in their fridge. They’re very nutrient-dense and low in calories.” And talk about versatile! Scramble an egg with leftovers for a healthy breakfast; drop a hard-boiled egg in a salad for a filling lunch; or serve them poached atop stir-fried vegetables, suggests nutrition expert Leanne Brown. And go for yogurt: “Buy plain yogurt in bulk, which is the best value for your money,” says Brown. “Stir in your favorite flavors like honey or fruit or use it to make smoothies. And when you consider



there are also savory options like tzatziki—yogurt mixed with shredded cucumbers and spices—the possibilities expand even more!”

Reach for three B’s!

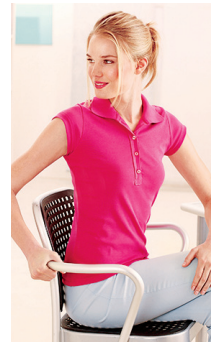
Three B’s that’ll boost your health and trim your grocery budget? *Berries*, *beans* and *bulk*, says Gans. “Frozen berries (as well as other fruits and veggies) aren’t just less expensive than fresh produce—they also have just as much, if not more, nutritional value because they’re harvested at peak ripeness,” she explains. “Just sprinkle them over yogurt and cereal. *Beans*, another healthy B, are also inexpensive and are strongly linked to longevity. Toss beans into your salads, or add them to stews and casseroles . . . which brings us to the third budget-boosting B, *bulk*, as in bulking up recipes with healthy beans and veggies! “Bulking up meatloaf or pasta sauce with chopped veggies helps cut costs by stretching your meals and making them more satisfying!”



2 Easy exercises!

Lift weights while you wait!

“Try putting one- to five-pound weights in a spot where you’re often waiting to do something else,” says fitness expert Charlene Torkelson. “For example, place weights by your washing machine so you can do a few bicep curls while you wait for a load to finish. Or keep them near the TV so you can exercise during commercials.”



Exercise less!

“The biggest misconception people have is that the harder and longer the workout, the better,” declares Torkelson. “Research shows that shorter, lower-impact exercises do *more* good!” Why?

No need to buy equipment!

Who needs a gym when a *chair* or *wall* works just as well as fancy exercise equipment? Try:
Seated leg lifts: Sit tall in a chair with your legs extended in front of you. Contract your abs and lift one or both legs up as high as is comfortable. Lower slowly and repeat 10 times.
Wall pushups: To improve your upper body strength, says Torkelson, just press in toward the wall, then push back keeping your back straight as you move in and out 10 times.

“Because people tend to do them more consistently. I recommend doing a few five- or ten-minute workouts a day—such as taking a quick walk or stretching at your desk! Whatever time you can put in will work!”

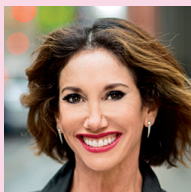
—Kristina Mastrocola



“Beef up” burgers with veggies!

Love burgers but hate the high price of red meat? Trim costs (and cholesterol!) with Brown’s best-of-both-worlds burgers: “My Half-Veggie Burgers have meaty flavor, lots of lean protein and lots of low-cost lentils!” To make: Mash 3 cups cooked lentils or black beans with the back of a large spoon. Mix with 1 cup finely chopped bell pepper and 1 lb. ground beef or other meat in a large bowl. Add an egg for extra firmness, if desired. Season with salt and pepper and form eight patties. Sear in a large skillet over medium-high heat until they’re dark brown on one side, about five minutes, then flip them and do the same on the other side. Place a slice of cheese on the patties after flipping them, if desired.

Our expert panel



Keri Gans, a registered dietitian based in New York City, is the author of *The Small Change Diet: 10 Steps to a Thinner, Healthier You*. Visit her at KeriGansNutrition.com.



Leanne Brown, author of the *New York Times* bestseller *Good and Cheap: Eat Well on \$4/day*, holds a master’s degree in food studies and food policy from New York University. Find more of her tips at LeanneBrown.com.



Fitness expert and dancer **Charlene Torkelson** is the author of *Get Fit While You Sit: Easy Workouts From Your Chair*. Learn more at CharTorkelson.com.