



*The
unofficial*

**Trim
Healthy
Mama**



Quick Start
Guide

by Gwen Brown

COPYRIGHT © 2015 GWEN BROWN

ALL RIGHT RESERVED

The *Unofficial* Trim Healthy Mama Quick Start Guide

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	page
Introduction	4
1. My Trim Healthy Mama Story	5
2. The New Books or the Original?	7
3. The Original Trim Healthy Mama Book Guide	8
4. Five Tips for Success	11
5. Five Common Mistakes to Avoid	12
6. Plan Basics	13
7. What to Eat: S & E	14
8. When to Eat It	16
9. Sweeteners & Reading Labels	19
<i>Printable Sweetener Chart</i>	20
10. The Most Important Thing	21
11. Setting Goals for Weight Loss	22
 Appendix	
THM Study Guide	25
My Favorite Recipes	27
Quick Start Plan	29
Grocery Shopping List Maker	33
Flagging Your Book	38
Progress Tracker	40
Additional Links & Resources	41

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to a whole new way of thinking about food! I put together this little book full of handy resources to help anyone who wants to go ahead and get started with Trim Healthy Mama plan while you're still working your way through the book. It's also for anyone who wants to learn more about the Trim Healthy Mama plan, and for those who are struggling and who want a fresh, practical approach to eating the THM way.

Trim Healthy Mama was life changing for me, and the initial steep learning curve was every bit worth it. In all, I lost over 45 pounds in the course of about 6 months. When I started, I didn't have any background in thinking about food as far as the micronutrient content (proteins, fats and carbs). I had done several long stints on another dieting plan that required counting points and doing math equations to figure out points for recipes, and I knew that was not sustainable for me. But THM turned out to be different.

But while the principles in the book sounded simple enough on the page, I was struggling with my own lack of understanding: what foods were carbs, and how do I actually apply the principles in everyday life? In other words, I was constantly plagued with the question *"What can I eat?"*

It dawned on me that other people were probably asking that same question. So I contacted the authors through their Trim Healthy Mama Facebook page with the idea to start a group. When I started the first official THM Facebook group, it was just Pearl and I, and a few documents that I'd created to help ladies get started on plan. A year later, the group had ballooned to over 60,000 members and is rapidly growing and spawning specialized groups.

The Facebook groups are VERY busy places, and those first few files I shared have been joined by thousands of others. I decided to create a small help book, with the author's blessings, to help ladies get started on plan. Though I no longer admin in the groups, I'm asked for tips and help often from other ladies who are trying to work their way through the book, or who have read the book review on my blog.

This second edition of the Quick Start Guide is updated and expanded to help you ease into the learning curve as you begin your first few weeks on plan. Though I don't outline the entire plan here, I give you room to take notes and some study helps as you read.

I want to help you condense what you're reading into practical steps and information that you can apply right away. I'll help you create a grocery list and a menu that will allow you to make delicious THM friendly as well as family friendly meals, snacks, and beverages.

Most of all, I want to see you succeed with a healthy and long term lifestyle change. I believe you can do this! I know you can.

Love,



Chapter 1

MY TRIM HEALTHY MAMA STORY

I'm not small boned, and I come from a long line of sturdy women. At my thinnest, when I was dating the man I would later marry, I warned him that once I had kids I would get fat. He'd have to be OK with that. I thought it was inevitable. That was just how real life happened, right? And indeed...it happened just as I'd predicted. Eighteen years and four children later, I was pleasantly plump despite my best efforts to stay slim. He had been warned.

In the summer of 2012, I was teetering just on the edge of 200 pounds. I had been steadily gaining weight, partly due to the health crisis I was in the midst of. I was busy and I was exhausted. It wasn't the ideal time to overhaul my eating style, but something HAD to give. Mainly because I was about to outgrow my jeans. I just flatly refused to buy a size larger.

Trim Healthy Mama was published in the late summer of 2012. I purchased a copy, and picked my way through a couple of chapters that fall, but really started reading in earnest on a road trip over the New Year holiday. When I hit the recipe section, I decided that I was going to start 2013 with this new approach to eating, even though I couldn't really fathom life without sugar and bread and Dr. Pepper. I started on January 1st, 2013, and humbly took a before photo a few days later, barely buttoning a pair of size 18 stretch jeans over my belly.

I had a few friends who had been enjoying the results of Trim Healthy Mama, and we started a small private Facebook group. Our little support group was my real time lifeline to share recipes, ask questions, and learn from others who were on plan successfully.

But this plan was SO challenging for me, because I didn't know much about where fats and carbs hid in my food. So I made lists and taped them into the cabinets and onto the fridge. I labeled food packages with a permanent marker. I pretty much slogged my way through the first few weeks. But by week four, I'd seen significant losses, and realized that I was beginning to fly solo at meals and snacks, no longer needing my cheat sheets. THM was becoming a way of life for me, and it was something I could enjoy doing without feeling in bondage to numbers.

I was also pouring myself into my new role as admin to the Trim Healthy Mama Facebook community, which expanded into dozens of other very large groups. I started blogging more regularly, and sharing recipes and tips for staying on plan. I was getting great results!

And I wasn't alone: I began to teach classes locally to introduce ladies to the THM plan. A sweet lady at my church who is in her 60's and has struggled with weight for as long as I've known her came up to me one week,



and grabbed my arm and said, "How do I stop losing weight? I'm about to have to go out and buy smaller clothes and I don't want to!"

Most importantly, I was really enjoying myself and this way of eating. By June of that year, I'd reached my goal weight, and was scheduled for a long overdue surgery to address my health situation. The labs that were run prior to my surgery showed *huge* improvements on my blood lipids over the labs from the previous year!*

Laboratory Test		Notes	High Risk	Intermediate Risk	Optimal	High Risk Range	Intermediate Risk Range	Optimal Range
2012	Total Cholesterol (mg/dL)			208		≥ 240	200 - 239	< 200
	LDL-C Direct (mg/dL)		130			≥ 130 CHD & CHD risk eq. > 100	100 - 129 CHD & CHD risk eq. 70 - 100	< 100 CHD & CHD risk eq. < 70
	HDL-C (mg/dL)				47	< 40		≥ 40
	Triglycerides (mg/dL)			199		> 199	150 - 199	< 150
	Non-HDL-C (mg/dL) (calculated)		161			≥ 160	130 - 159	< 130
2013	Total Cholesterol (mg/dL)				173	≥ 240	200 - 239	< 200
	LDL-C Direct (mg/dL)				111	Note: they used a different test; the range for the 2013 test is <130		
	HDL-C (mg/dL)				50	< 40		≥ 40
	Triglycerides (mg/dL)				61	> 199	150 - 199	< 150
	Non-HDL-C (mg/dL) (calculated)				123	≥ 160	130 - 159	< 130

There are many, many ladies who have, like me, experienced what they'd consider to be a THM "miracle", but Trim Healthy Mama does not work for every person like it did for me. In fact, due to my health challenges and quick weight loss, I began to experience another health crisis that brought me to the point of seeking help via a holistic doctor.

I mention this for two reasons. One is that my health limitations made it necessary for me to focus my time here at home, and I realized it was time for my involvement with the THM community to come to an end. The other is to let you know: if you're one of the ladies that THM doesn't work for...I've walked that road too.

I've learned that each of us comes to THM with a unique body chemistry that can profoundly affect the way your body uses the food you put in it. So eating healthy foods does not always equal a healthy body if your body is very out of balance. Indeed, losing weight may not equal a healthier you if your digestion or endocrine system are out of whack.

You may be successfully on plan, but not losing because your body needs additional balancing and support. There is no guilt in that. Be encouraged that THM is a fantastic starting point to healthier living, and it's a great way to nail down healthy eating, so that your doctor can get a better idea of what may not be working well in your body. With THM, the doctor can't just say, "You're not eating right." Because you will be!

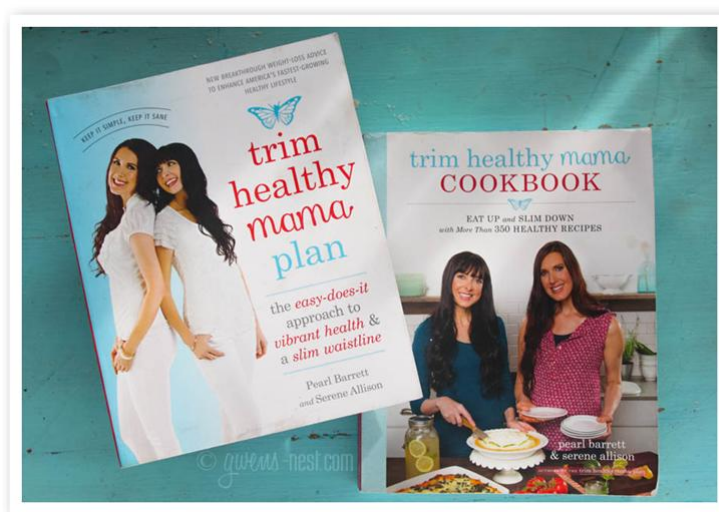
I'm still a big advocate of the Trim Healthy Mama way of eating, but I wish that I had slowed down my losses, since I was already in the middle of a health crisis. Losing weight so quickly put additional stress on my body and liver. Looking back, that's the one thing I would change. ***I would be less in a hurry to lose weight.*** I would also like to call myself up last year and insist that I find a health care provider who could walk me through the healing process after my surgery instead of waiting so long to address my body's imbalances.

So that's where I am today. Trim Healthy Mama has been a *huge* part of my journey back to health and I'm now in single digit clothing sizes. The me of 2012 would never have thought a size 8 was possible. But I have the jeans to prove it. And I'm wearing them! [See all of my before and after posts here.](#)

*Please note that if you're in active weight loss mode, this may skew your blood lipid panels. Please ask your doctor about running your lipids panel after you've reached goal weight if possible. This article over at Mark's Daily Apple (Paleo forum) addresses [controlled carb diets and possible short term cholesterol spikes.](#)

Chapter 2

THE NEW BOOKS OR THE ORIGINAL?



The new Plan and Cookbook would be my choice if I were just starting out with Trim Healthy Mama. They contain the most updated information and are just very polished and beautiful books that you'll enjoy owning and reading.

I really like the more succinct style, although like the original book, they're both written in the friendly, conversational tone of the authors.

I love the gorgeous photography in the cookbook, as well as all of the new added recipes from readers and bloggers, and they're all in a standard recipe format with measurements.

I also really appreciate the new Appendix in the plan book, that gives you a handy overview of the different meal types. It's a fantastic flip-to-reference!

I also really appreciate that the two books are useful individually, so you can keep the cookbook in the kitchen and take the plan book in your bag or by your favorite reading chair.

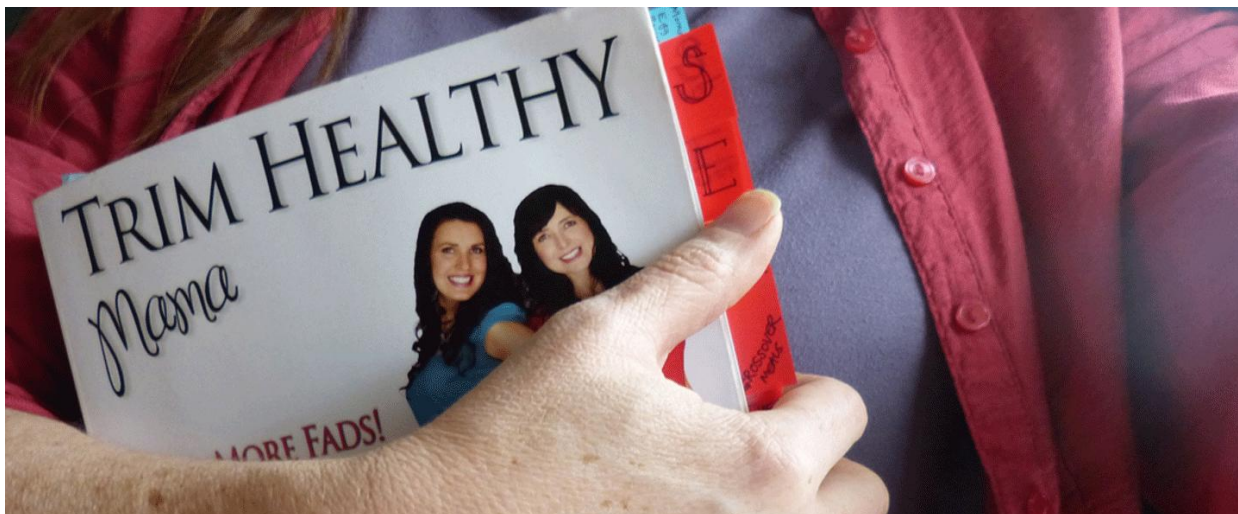
The benefits of the original book are that it contained more of the "why" and science behind how the plan works, and it had a lot of cute illustrations of the sisters. It also contains chapters on hormones, food & the Bible, and even a healthy sex life.

The drawbacks of the original book are: non-standardized recipe formatting that can be frustrating, some serious index issues especially with the recipes index, and you won't get as up to date information and recipes.

If you LOVE the plan book, and are hungry for more, try borrowing or checking out the original book from your local library!

Chapter 3

THE ORIGINAL TRIM HEALTHY MAMA BOOK GUIDE



READING YOUR TRIM HEALTHY MAMA BOOK

I found it very helpful to think of the Trim Healthy Mama book as a conversation style text written by two sisters/friends. This is how Pearl and Serene come to life through the pages as they walk you through their plan and recipes. Their sweet and funny natures, as well as their competitive sides shine through in the book.

Just read for enjoyment and you'll have plenty of "Aha!" moments. ***Please don't feel that you have to read and remember each word for a final exam.*** As you read, and begin the plan, start to be aware of your inner dialogue. Food and weight are huge issues for many of us that haunt our hearts and hopes. Let yourself enjoy the journey instead of wasting energy stressing over perfection or guilt. Give yourself grace.

Breathe, highlight, take notes. Set it down and come back to it later. Just take one step at a time. Realize that it may take a month of Sundays to get this really figured out, and that weeks or months later you may discover a new change or way of doing things. That's OK. That's how THM is meant to be read, enjoyed and savored. Step by step by step. Ponder, giggle, enjoy. It's how lasting change happens.

SHOULD I BUY THE PAPERBACK OR THE E-BOOK?

Personally, I like to read with my highlighter in hand, and I much prefer a print book for reading. However, I enjoy the search feature in the e-book, which I installed on my desktop as well as on my Kindle. ([Learn how here](#)) Having the e book allows me to loan out my real book to friends and still have access to recipes.

CAN'T AFFORD THE BOOK?

It's worth saving your pennies for, but I totally get this. It's not cheap, but it's got an impressive cookbook that you're not going to want to go without. And I ended up referencing mine often with questions. You may be able to borrow a book from a friend. Or ask your local library to get it in stock or in their Kindle program if they have it. Or [join Swagbucks](#) (affiliate link) and earn cash by using their search engine when you're online. It adds up!

WHERE SHOULD I START READING?

In the new Plan book, it's easy enough to follow from front to back. This section applies to the original book.

For the original book, I started at the front and went in order, but I know that's not everyone's style. If you're a front to back style reader, you'll have plenty of material to enjoy. If you're a hop around reader, here are the key areas of the book for your perusing pleasure

You may find the following helpful when going back to re-read a section. (Every time I re-read I discover more gems!)

PART I

Chapters 1-6 walk you through many popular styles of eating, using playful nicknames for the characters. If you want to see what the girls think of vegetarianism, green smoothie diets, or calorie counting, this is the section to read.

I recommend starting here, as we've all seen the hype from different dietary approaches and so many of us are currently living with the not so happy side effects of these popular approaches to eating.

This section helps to lay the groundwork for the THM plan in the next section, and they refer back to the fictional characters later in the book. It's a quick read.

PART II

Chapters 7-17 outline the Core Principles of the Trim Healthy Mama plan. This is where you'll find the food lists, and the terminology that they use for the different styles of meals.

This is MUST READ material. If you just want to jump in and start applying, this is the section for you. Bring your highlighter, and follow along on my highlighter challenge on page in the appendix.

The heart of the plan is explained in chapters 8- S Meals, chapter 9- E Meals, and chapter 11-which outlines when to eat each style of meal and snack, as well as timing. (Hint: it's a casual approach, but it works.)

Keep digging through this section to discover valuable tips on saving money, the foods that the sisters love and use, tips for eating out, and even a whole chapter devoted to beverages.

Tip: Don't go out and buy every food item they mention. Basically, they're letting you peek inside their cabinets, but you truly don't need any or all of the superfood or specialty items to be on plan.

To make your grocery list, see page 32.

Special Note:

Chapter 28 is the **One Week Fuel Cycle**. Please do NOT start out using the Fuel Cycle model of THM.

It's much more challenging and intense than the recommended "freestyling" approach to meals, and only for those who have been on plan for a few months **and** who are having trouble budgeting the scales.

PART III

In the Kitchen is the recipe section of the book. When I hit this section, I jumped on plan and hung on as I taste tested my way through it. This hefty section is a full scale cookbook. The recipes are not written in conventional style, but there will be a future edition with standardized formatting. You'll again see the differences in Pearl's cooking style and Serene's. Go with whatever style you are most comfortable with. You don't have to convert to a purist to be on plan, nor do you have to ditch whole foods and buy a tub of Truvia. Make it work for your current food values.

I highly recommend flagging your recipe sections-see page 37 in the appendix
To see my favorite recipes, see page 26

PART IV

Pearl & Serene's individual stories and misadventures with food and diets are shared in part IV. You'll learn why they do not recommend vegan or raw food diets in this section, as well as in part I of the book.

PART V

This is the catch all section of the book covering hormones, bedroom advice, supplements, skin care, exercise, and pregnancy, as well as an FAQ section about the plan. It's not required reading to get started, but it's worth scanning through as you go through the plan. Especially the FAQ and workout chapters.

Important Note. If you already work out, then ***definitely*** read through chapters 37 and 38. The end of chapter 37 especially has valuable advice on fueling your workouts with the right kinds of nutrients and foods.

CHAPTER 4

GWEN'S TOP 5 TIPS FOR STARTING THM

1. **Go ahead and order any specialty ingredients you'd like to try online when you order the book.** By the time you get to the recipe section and are salivating over the fat stripping frappe, the 3-5 day shipping from Amazon seems like FOREVER.

And no, you don't *have* to have any specialty ingredients starting out. You can by substitute products, make do, do without, or buy the items at your grocery store but you'll pay a LOT more for them there.

I started out with **glucomannan, protein powder, and stevia extract**. Amazon is my favorite place to order. I've created a [Trim Healthy Amazon store](#) for my top picks and fun food items that I enjoy on THM! I even include the items that you can find in your grocery store, so you can see the packaging and brand names

Important Note: The stevia that is recommended in the first edition of the book changed formulation and is not as tasty or concentrated as it once was. Trim Healthy Mama now sells their own very pure and sweet Stevia. I reviewed it [here](#). Check the shopping list maker on page 33 , because there may be some on plan sweetener options already in your grocery store.

2. **Give yourself permission to accidentally mess up, and just KEEP GOING.** If you've never done a carb-focused diet plan before, just plan on it taking a good solid month to learn the food categories and just to get used to this way of eating. By then, you'll see the scales start moving, and start realizing all the other health benefits. It's OK to struggle and mess up. THM has a pretty big learning curve for some people, but you WILL get there, and it will get easier! No guilt! Even accidental crossovers are still healthy, low glycemic meals. **Tip:** Use a sharpie marker to write on the packages and containers to help jog your memory.
3. **Join a support group.** [TrimHealthyMama.com](#), the **THM Forum**, **one or several of the [Trim Healthy Mama Facebook Groups](#)**, or even a **local group of THM ladies** are all great options.

Note: It's a secret/private group, so only group members can see posts on their newsfeed. Your Ex-boyfriend's third grade teacher will not ever get to see what you had for breakfast (unless she's also in the group) Or you can try the [THM Forum](#) if that's more your style.

4. **Print out Helps from the Facebook Group files**, and look through some of the awesome docs for lots of amazing helps, lists, and recipes (Please note that at this time the Facebook App does not let you view docs in groups). OR Join the Trim Healthy Mama website community that's FULL of fantastic resources and recipes.
5. **Flag the pages in your book** with plastic post it tabs. (Appendix, page 38)

Chapter 5

5 MOST COMMON MISTAKES THAT YOU CAN AVOID:

1. **Don't forget to drink at least 3 big glasses of water per day.** This diet is much higher in fiber than what I was used to, and I ran into...shall we say, "trouble." Trust me. Drink your water. And grab a bottle of magnesium oxide just in case "trouble" visits you as well. (Original Book p. 599-600; Plan, p. 233)
2. **Don't forget to eat your veggies and fruits each day!** In fact, plan your dinner and lunches around nice big sides of veggies or with big salads. This not only helps stave off "trouble", but it's a BIG part of putting the "Healthy" in the plan. Greens stimulate and enhance your body's natural detox system, so find a way to make them your friend every day if you can!
3. **Don't forget eat every 3 to 4 hours...**it keeps your metabolism rocking and rolling. ***Skipping meals and snacks will stall your metabolism***, make you grouchy, and make you way more tempted to step off plan. Keep some easy snacks or lunch fixings on hand for busy days, and even set a timer if you are prone to forget meals & snack breaks. Ladies who are pregnant or nursing, or who work out heavily may need to eat more frequently.
4. **Don't get stuck in S mode!** This is THE most common mistake I have seen. THM is *not* a heavy S plan, or a low carb or no carb diet plan. Yes, you should enjoy your food, but you also need *variety* in your food. Enjoy the steak and cream pops with no guilt, but be sure that you vary the amount of fat in your S meals, and do light S and deep S more often than heavy S meals.

Your body will tell you how many E meals to include. For me, not being hungry at meals, feeling sluggish or tired, lacking mental focus, and getting headaches are all signs that I really **need** some healthy carbs. Please include those healthy E's, even if you really, really, really love the S meals.

5. **Don't forget to listen to your body!** Learning to listen to your body is one of the great gifts and challenges of THM. It's definitely worth mentioning that not every food listed in the book is necessary in implementing this plan, and ***some may not work with your unique body chemistry***. You **can** use mostly normal foods that you already buy if you're a relatively healthy shopper. Use common sense when choosing new foods to try: if you're allergic to peanuts, avoid peanut flour.

I recommend trying just one or two new items at a time. It's better for your budget and your body to get to know a new food to see if they're a good fit for you. If a new food or product makes you feel bad, ***please don't continue to use it***. If you start getting skin reactions, headaches, or other odd symptoms outside of just normal 'adjustment' to starting a new way of eating, start removing foods to find the culprit. Stevia can be an issue for some people, including some (but not all) who have allergies to ragweed, as can any other healthy, natural foods including things like eggs, nuts, dairy, and wheat/gluten. But you can still do THM without your allergenic foods. Check out the [THM Allergen Free group on Facebook](#) for help!

AND A BONUS

Don't miss out on documenting your "before"...you'll want to celebrate how far you've come!

Take a before photo and measurements before starting...and make a few notes on your health and fitness to look back at later. It may be humbling or horrifying at first, but it's SO encouraging to track your progress down the road! One day you could be a [featured before & after](#) like these ladies! (Or just use the chart of p. 40)

Chapter 6

PLAN BASICS

Let's start by nailing down the basics of the THM plan. Here's a great quick breakdown of the key principles from Amanda Coers at TheCoersFamily.com

Keep fats and carbs separated. The great thing about THM is you can have healthy fats and healthy carbs, you just don't eat them together in the same meal while you're trying to lose weight.

Eat some form of protein with every meal. Protein is your primary fuel source on the THM plan.

*Stay away from all types of sugars. While trying to lose weight it's best to avoid excess insulin. The THM plan utilizes sugar substitutes: Stevia, Truvia, Erythritol, or Xylitol. **Special Note:** please know that xylitol is poisonous for dogs. Keep any treats made with xylitol away from your pets for their safety!*

Julie, at [Savvy Homemaking](http://SavvyHomemaking) says this about keeping your carbs and fats separated:

For most of us this is a total game changer...the reason for this absolute "law" of THM is that when we eat these two different body fuel sources together, ultimately one will be used as a fuel while the other gets safely stored away as fat (See Chapter 1 of Trim Healthy Mama); a good thing for our growing children who are still developing and literally growing in all ways, but a bad thing for the vast majority of us adults. Separation is key!

Are you ready to get started? Let's dive into learning what you can eat!

Chapter 7

WHAT TO EAT

There are three things you really need to get rolling with the Trim Healthy Mama plan. The first is an understanding of the two basic food or meal types and what foods fall into them. Initially this was a BIG challenge for me, but don't worry. I've developed a study guide to take the guesswork out of it for you. The second is a good sweetener. We'll cover both in this chapter.

THE MEAL TYPES

In the Trim Healthy Mama book, you'll be learning two key fuel types that you'll use to build meals and snacks: **S** and **E** fuels. Want to put on weight? Use both fuels, called "**Crossing Over**" in the book. The meals and snacks that I make for my kids are crossovers (I simply add a side dish to our family meal that adds the other fuel type for those who have healthy metabolisms.)

Fuel Pull is another term you'll see in the book. This means that the food or meal contains super low levels of fat or carbs, so these foods are very versatile and can be used in either meal type, or can be used exclusively for meals or snacks. If I've eaten a heavy lunch, I will choose a Fuel Pull snack a few hours later. **Fuel pull foods and recipes are the blue jeans of Trim Healthy Mama...they go with everything!**

A quick note about the recipes in the book. Many of them are labeled "**S, E, or FP**". **Recipes with this label are Fuel Pull when prepared as written**, but you'll usually find recipe notes showing you how it can be paired with fats to create an S meal, or healthy carbs to go with an E meal or snack. Your focus early on will be in learning which foods are S and E fuels when creating meals and snacks. So let's start there.

I've created a DIY study sheet in the appendix for you to print and fill out as you read chapters 6-11 in your Original Trim Healthy Mama book or chapters 3-7 in the Plan book. The highlighter challenge will really help you grasp which foods are which. I developed this idea when working with the Facebook groups, and it really helps to firm up an understanding of where your fuels are coming from when creating meals. It may help for you to skim back over the chapter and look for the foods that they mention as being healthy fuel sources.

S IS FOR SATISFYING

S meals can be rich, comforting, and decadent-they are filling and they are easy to get addicted to.



"S meals are going to be the comfort foods that have naturally occurring fats. If your tummy is growling, the S foods will really satisfy you on a deep level.

Your body really *needs* these healthy oils and fats. They're key building blocks for the endocrine system. Did you know that a good portion of your brain, nerve cells, and even the hormones to run your body are fats/lipids? The delicious and healthy fat sources in S meals will give your body the building blocks it needs to nourish the body systems that depend on fats."

[~Gwen's Nest THM book review](#)

E IS FOR ENERGIZING

I've heard many Mamas express that E meals don't hold the same appeal to many as the decadent S meals. But then you're missing out on all of the lovely possibilities of enjoying fruit, rice, and beans in your meals.



If you're stuck in an S rut, then I challenge you to take a couple of days and be very intentional about adding in E foods and meals. They can be comfort food in their own right, and downright addicting once you get them mastered! They're lighter, but they give your body an easy energy source. And there are lots of wonderful, filling E meal recipes that are in the comfort food category at our house.

It's SUPER important to be intentional about your E meals and snacks...you'll learn to love them!

From my [THM Book Review](#):

*E stands for energizing...our muscles favorite fuel is glucose, and the brain's preferred energy source is glucose or sugar. No WONDER it's so addicting in large amounts! If we're low in glucose, then we're going to feel flat and very low energy. On the other hand, if we have **too much**, too regularly, then the body wisely stores away the excess...guess where. In FAT cells! So too much sugar makes us flabby and very low energy.*

The KEY to E meals is learning where those healthy carbs are hiding in your kitchen. But first let me emphasize this:

It's not an E meal unless you've got between 20-45 grams of carbs.

You can make a beautiful low fat meal, but it is **not** an E meal if you're not getting those healthy carbs in.

But just to be clear: an E is NOT just about numbers. There are lots and lots of naughty ways to get carbs that will give you a temporary spike in insulin, but are not healthy and energizing. To be a true Energizing healthy food, you're going to need complex carbs. What are complex carbs? I'll give you a hint: grains, beans, a few starchy veggies, and fruit.

To really nail down your understanding of S and E fuel foods, complete the printable study guides and highlighter challenges in the appendix on page 25.

Chapter 8

WHEN TO EAT IT

I encountered so much confusion over this one issue as an admin on the Trim Healthy Mama groups. Basically, the plan is one that give you the freedom to choose which type of meal or food will work best for your body, based on whether you need an energy boost [E] or a satisfying stick to your ribs meal [S].

Check out Chapter 11, p. 110 in the Original book, or chapter 8, p. 73 in Plan for how to really implement the different meal types, as well as describing the breaks between eating periods and why that's important. If you're really struggling with the "When to eat what?" question, I'll let you read through it in the author's own words, and you can fill in the blanks on your study sheet in the appendix as a quick reference/reminder.

MEAL TIMING

Trim Healthy Mama encourages you to wait 2 1/2-3 hours between eating periods to give your digestive system a break. Nursing or pregnant Mamas may need and want to eat more frequently than this. It's also important to eat regularly, so don't go beyond 4 hours without a meal or snack with some protein in it.



When to eat breakfasts and snacks is very flexible, depending on when you get up and get going in the mornings. Very early risers often will enjoy a mid-morning snack and slightly later lunch, while ladies who eat breakfast later usually only have a mid-afternoon snack between lunch and dinner. Flex to your life, and what works for you.

WHEN TO EAT S MEALS

S meals are your go to when you want a stick to your ribs meal. They are so easy to fall in love with that it's easy to find time for S meals and snacks!

Just remember to cultivate a taste for lighter S meals, and to enjoy plenty of greens and veggies to keep a balance with your S fuels. Don't fall into a heavy S rut!

WHEN TO EAT E MEALS

E meals are *super* important on the THM plan. They keep your brain and muscles fueled and energized! If you're feeling sluggish, foggy headed, or are not hungry at meal times (a sign for me that my metabolism is slowing down), reach for an E meal or snack.



My rule of thumb: Most of us need at least one E meal daily, but pregnant or nursing Mama's need more of this important brain and muscle fuel. Breastmilk is supposed to be about 30% glucose, so if you're a nursing Mama, you really are fueling for two when it comes to E meals.

If you work out, you'll also need to add in additional E fuel to keep your metabolism revving and your workouts fueled. Serene recommends using an E meal or snack about an hour before exercise (Read more in the Original book on p.555, Chapter 37; not covered in the new Plan book).

Listen to your body, and consider its fuel needs in deciding how many E meals you use per day. They're my go to for days when I've got lots of mental or physical work to do, or if I'm trying to recover from an illness, I will stick with my E's.

ALL THE OTHER MEAL TYPES

Once you get rolling with S and E meals. (Not just S meals, OK? Pinkie promise?) You'll gradually begin incorporating other types of meals, like Fuel Pull, or S helper meals as you find the need.

Maybe you know you need more carbs in for the day, but you're super hungry too? An S helper would be a great choice. Maybe you've had a super heavy S breakfast, and it's time to eat again but you're not really that hungry? Try a Fuel Pull snack or Frappe to keep your metabolism rolling without adding in extra fuel.

There is no set in stone rule for how many of each or for exactly what to eat to get started. Some people *really* like to have a sample menu, so I've included one in the appendix to give you an idea of what it can look like to have a full week on plan. But first, you need to know the MOST important thing about success on an eating plan.

DRINKS

Some of the [THM friendly drink recipes](#) are considered "sippers" meaning they are like water, and you can sip on them all day. Others, like the Fat Stripping Frappa (p. 240, chapter 18) are more substantial, and you'll want to save these to pair with a meal or they can even stand alone as a snack! The Frappa is a great add on to a lighter E meal if you feel like you just need more.



NOTES ON BREADS & LOW CARB PRODUCTS



This is a tough part for those just starting. If you're normally very dependent on breads and crackers in your daily meals, I would recommend using the on plan store breads to start out, and stepping your way back to depend on them less. I did not find the S style bread recipes in the book to be compatible with "real" bread, but your mileage may vary.

I found that the enjoyment I thought I was getting out of breads and crackers was mainly the carb high they were providing. When I swapped out with lower glycemic breads and crackers, I could eat far less and feel satisfied, and didn't feel the draw to eat them daily. Again...your mileage may vary.

It's not *just* about numbers with store bought baked goods. Many of the products that are marked as "Low Carb" contain some questionable ingredients (soy, sucralose, weird gums and fillers, cellulose etc.) that I like to really limit. For this reason, I prefer to use the low carb items sparingly. Try to balance your ingredients preferences with your need for convenience breads, and keep in mind that lettuce wraps and salads are alternative ways to enjoy your favorite savory sandwich toppings.

The Easy Bread recipe on my site is my personal favorite pizza crust and flatbread on plan. It's a delicious E meal base. I prefer to use the OLE Xtreme Wellness HIGH fiber wraps pictured above for making sandwiches. They have a very clean ingredient list. For toast, I prefer Ezekiel sesame bread found in the freezer section

Please note that **the Rye breads sold in the grocery stores are not on plan**...they only contain trace amounts of rye for flavor, but are mostly higher carb refined flours. If you find a low carb item you think will work, check the *net* carbs- simply subtract the total fiber from the total carbs to get the net carbs...you want 6 or less per serving.



SWEETENERS & READING LABELS

Sweeteners can feel overwhelming at first. The printable chart on the next page will make it super easy! You don't have to memorize everything on the chart...just focus on the ingredients. Let me make this simple for you. There are 3 rules when it comes to sweeteners:

1. ALWAYS read the ingredients label.

Even if it says "stevia" on the front, read the full ingredients label to make sure all of the ingredients work with the plan. See the printable chart on p. 16. You're looking for sugars **added** in the ingredients list. Not necessarily sugar grams on the nutrition label. Sugar grams may be naturally occurring in things you *don't count*, like berries, tomatoes, and low carb veggies. That's why it's easiest to just focus on the ingredient list first.

2. Sweeten to taste.

Sugar is simple. Low glycemic sweeteners aren't. Some work better than others for certain jobs, and stevia extracts can be downright yucky tasting. So always buy small until you confirm that you like a sweeter before investing in the full box. Use the smallest amount called for in the recipe tasting as you to go add sweetness. [Here are my top 10 tips with using stevia extracts](#). Hang in there-after you find what you like it's SO much easier!

3. Pay attention to any side effects!

Many people do great with non-glycemic sweeteners, but there are some people who really can't tolerate them or who develop sensitivity to them. **Pay attention to your symptoms and discontinue use of any sweeteners or foods that cause problems for your body.** Stevia is from the same (very large) plant family as ragweed. Some (but not all) people with ragweed allergies may also react to stevia. Common reactions to stevia can include: headaches, numbness or pinched feeling in face or neck, dizziness, joint pain, feeling low energy/loopy, heart palpitations, or symptoms of electrolyte imbalance.

LABEL READING TIPS:

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1/2 cup (113g)	
Servings Per Container about 6	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 45	Calories from Fat 10
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 1g	1%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 480mg	20%
Total Carbohydrate 8g	3%
Dietary Fiber 2g	8%
Sugars 4g	
Protein 2g	
Vitamin A 6%	Vitamin C 15%
Calcium 6%	Iron 6%

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

	Calories:	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Sat Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

Calories per gram:
Fat 9 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4

INGREDIENTS: ORGANIC TOMATO PUREE, ORGANIC TOMATOES, SALT, ORGANIC ONIONS, ORGANIC SOYBEAN OIL, ORGANIC SUGAR, ORGANIC PARMESAN CHEESE (CULTURED PASTEURIZED ORGANIC MILK, SALT, POWDERED CELLULOSE, MICROBIAL ENZYMES), ORGANIC GARLIC POWDER, ORGANIC GARLIC, ORGANIC BASIL, ORGANIC OREGANO.

CONTAINS: MILK



CERTIFIED ORGANIC BY
QUALITY ASSURANCE INTERNATIONAL

1. Start with the ingredient list: This is the quickest way to decide if a product is on plan. Usually, if sugar is listed high up on the list, then it's not going to work on plan.


For this organic marinara sauce, it's listed at number 6. The book recommends using a sauce that's made without sugar. If the product passes your ingredient check then...

2. Check the Nutrition Facts:

- Start with **Serving Size**: does this accurately reflect the amount you're planning to use?
- Check **Total Fat**: this product is low in fat, so it would not automatically make a dish an S if used.
- Check **Total Carbohydrates**, and subtract the fiber to get the net carbs per serving. This is the average amount of carb fuel you'll get from a serving. This would add about 6 grams of carbs. Technically this would be a FP number, but again-I'd look for a sugar free option.

Quick Start Guide

PRINTABLE SWEETENERS CHART

<i>Yes!</i>	<i>No!</i> <i>Too High Glycemic-my rule of thumb is to avoid these if they add more than 1 gram of sugar per serving.</i>	<i>Fake!</i>
<p>Pure stevia extract</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trim Healthy Mama brand stevia & Sweet Blend • Other good brands: ask in the THM community for current recommendations- the brands change formulation from time to time. <i>Look for one without maltodextrin.</i> <p>Stevia Blends</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sweetleaf flavored Stevia Drops • Truvia in the small tub or comparable store brand of stevia and erythritol • Stevia packets <p>Sugar Alcohols</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Erythritol • Xylitol- toxic to dogs! Less "cooling" mouth effect, but some need to start with smaller amounts for their tummy to adjust to this one. <p>Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • chicory root (inulin fiber) • Freeze Dried Fruits- technically not a sweetener, but totally on plan! • Monk Fruit Extract (Lo Han extract) 	<p>High glycemic sugars - <i>check the ingredients list</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sugar, raw sugar • fructose • date, cane, or beet sugar • sucrose • molasses • brown sugar • organic sugar • -ose (glucose, maltose, lactose) • turbinado • evaporated cane juice • invert sugar <p>High Glycemic Fillers- <i>often found in stevia and baking blends</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maltodextrin • dextrose <p>High Glycemic Syrups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • high fructose corn syrup • corn syrup • brown rice syrup • agave nectar • maple syrup • honey (including raw, local, etc.) • apple concentrate • fruit juice concentrates, etc. <p>Dried fruits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • raisins • dates • currents • prunes • apricots, etc. 	<p>Artificial Sweeteners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sucralose- (Splenda) • acesulfame potassium • aspartame (Equal, NutraSweet) • saccharin (Sweet'N Low, Sugar Twin) <div data-bbox="1136 1659 1494 1932" style="text-align: right;">  <p>© gwens-nest.com</p> </div>

Chapter 10

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING

This is a chapter that I'm personally passionate about. Most of us have been trained by past diets that success is promised if we following a food list or a menu plan exactly. Sadly, this rarely pans out to be true. There is no one size fits all eating plan. **Following a food list or plan is NOT the most important factor for success on a diet.**

The most important factor for success with becoming healthy and trimming down is this:

LEARN HOW *YOUR* UNIQUE BODY RESPONDS TO DIFFERENT FOODS AND FUELS.

This is a hard concept for most of us who are used to "good food vs. bad food" thinking that is rampant in blogging, articles, and diet plans. And while it's true that there are good and bad foods in general, it's rarely highlighted how important it is to recognize which foods are good and bad for *your* unique digestive system and body. But it's **CRITICAL**.

Want an example of how important this is?

Some of the ladies in the diabetic group were comparing notes with how to get in an E meal during the day. Some of the ladies cannot tolerate oatmeal at all, *even though it's a plan approved, slow carb*. Their body chemistry does not process it slowly, and it skyrockets their sugars. Others can eat old fashioned oats in the morning, but not later in the day. And yet others get skyrocketing sugar readings in the mornings with oats, but do fine with an oat based snack after dinner.

This is why it's so important to pay attention to how *your body* is responding to the different on plan foods. And this is why, if these ladies were following a THM approved menu would get all different results. In fact, this is one reason why the Trim Healthy Mama book does not include pre-done menus for you to follow.

Now, many of us will not have such tricky body chemistry, but you will be able to start recognizing how an E meal feels as opposed to how you feel after eating an S fuel meal. Pay attention to your body if it sends you signals about certain foods.

Feeling very warm or very cold right after eating can be a sign that your body is having trouble handling a food that you're eating. There are MANY fantastic foods and recipes on THM, and I promise you can successfully be on plan while eliminating foods that bother you. In fact, I'm going to go so far as to say that it's critical for your success. (See Resources on page 41 for some allergen friendly THM bloggers)

What if You're Stalled?

If you have underlying health issues like hormone issues, digestive problems, etc. and you're not seeing progress on THM after several months and a Fuel Cycle, then please consider seeking additional help via a health care provider or practitioner.

I personally look for a Dr who is trained in the Functional Medicine approach. These practitioners have a solid medical background and use labs and testing, but they have a preference for alternative and natural therapies over drugs. They are trained to work closely with each patient, looking not only at symptoms, but also genetic predisposition, environmental, and lifestyle factors to get to the root of your health problems.

Check out the [Institute for Functional Medicine](#) to learn more, or to find a practitioner near you.

Chapter 10

SETTING GOALS FOR WEIGHT LOSS



click to [read this post on weight loss & stalling](#)

There were always lots of questions in our beginners group about setting weight loss goals. I'll share with you what worked well for me, and offer some "what not to do" tips as well on this topic.

I did set an overall weight goal, based on the body weight that I felt the most healthy and that was appropriate for my frame size. But I also set mini-goals to celebrate along the way. It went something like this:

- **5 pounds:** I would treat myself to a Volcano Mudslide Muffin. But let's be honest...I was already treating myself to Mudslide Muffins for breakfast! :)
- **10 pounds:** I would treat myself to a new color of nailpolish and paint my toes.
- **15 pounds:** new undies. The old ones were not staying put anymore.
- **20 pounds:** Closet cleanout! I had a few pair of smaller jeans that I'd worn postpartum with my last baby that I'd shrunk into, but all of the size 16/18 had to GO! I spent about \$30 in new clothing at the thrift store, with attention to stretchy waists that would continue to shrink with me.
- **30 pounds:** a pair of new earrings.
- **35 pounds:** a new necklace that I had wanted for a long time. And surprise, surprise...all of those size 12 jeans that I'd been saving for goal weight were too small! (And too outdated)
- **45 pounds:** goal weight! I saved up and did a final shopping spree, and bought a beautiful new blue coat that I wore in the photos on my blog.

WHAT NOT TO DO

There are more than a few pitfalls to weight loss and setting expectations that I would love to help you avoid. Here are my top 3:

1. **Don't get hung up on skinny or the cultural icon of beauty.** Beauty is an inside out thing. Some of the most beautiful women I have known were gray haired and perfectly plump. Most of us are not built to be skinny. I didn't even have thigh gap in the womb. Look at your genetic history if you can...pull out the old photos. Are your ancestors looking like Twiggy or like sturdy farm wives? Take note. Appreciate. This is your genetic lineage, and it's beautiful.
2. **Don't use the standard weight charts** or compare yourself with the goal weight of the petite young thing that lives up the street. Remember that **your body is made up of far more than just fat. Your bones, muscle mass, organs, and even your blood volume all contribute to your body weight.** It doesn't take much looking around to realize that bodies come in all shapes and sizes.

If you are a very petite build, with small bone structure and tiny wrists and ankles, then your healthy weight will fall lower on the "healthy weight range" charts. If you have what I like to call "sturdy" bones like I do, your healthy weight may be right at the tippy top of the charts. But that's OK, because the charts are just someone else's average. Shoot for the weight that you feel the healthiest at, and be willing to flex as you go.

3. Please, please, please. PLEASE! <insert big sad puppy dog eyes> **Do NOT set a time or date goal with your weight goals.** Please.

Being thinner does not make your cruise more fun, your wedding more memorable, or your life more enjoyable. It just doesn't. Love the journey, and love your body right where it is. Some women experience stalls while losing weight. It's a very common occurrence on any weight loss plan, and let's be honest here...it's kind of a bummer.

But it's REALLY a huge bummer if you've set a goal date to lose weight. And it's downright devastating if you're banking on being a certain amount skinny for a big event. That's the sort of mental setback that will make you fall off the wagon and stop trying. But here's another secret that I don't even understand yet: I would often drop sizes even when the scale was stalled. So hang in there, and do NOT set a date on your body. Let your body go through the process at its own pace.

APPENDIX

THM STUDY GUIDE

THE S MEAL

If you're familiar with low carb dieting, S meals are going to look familiar to you. In fact, many low carb or Paleo recipes fit the guidelines for S recipes! But be careful about overusing almond flour. It's a heavy S food, and should be used sparingly.

Learn more about the S Fuel in chapter and fill in the blanks below: (Original, p. 65; Plan, p.27)

S stands for _____. These meals are low in _____ but contain healthy sources of _____ to fuel the body. If I'm really hungry, and want a stick to my ribs meal, then my body is asking for an S meal or snack.

S meals and snacks are centered on a good source of _____, and are rounded out with _____ - _____ veggies. S meals may be very rich and high in _____ at times, but it's important to vary your fat and calorie intake if you're pursuing weight loss, so be sure to enjoy plenty of lighter S meals and snacks as well.

S Fuel Highlighter Challenge

Turn to the S food list in your book (Original, p.74; Plan, p. 33): these are the types of foods you can use to create an S meal, but not **all** of these items are good sources of fat. Pick any color of highlighter to represent S foods, and **only** mark the foods that provide healthy sources of fat in a normal serving.

Tips: You will not mark a good many of the foods on this list...they are the Fuel Pull foods!

If you have trouble with this exercise, try going back through the chapter, and see which foods the authors mention as healthy sources of fat.

Some ladies have been really tripped up by the fact that ***some protein sources are also healthy sources of fat.*** Check the book for what meats are considered lean in the E chapter (Original, chapter 9; Plan, chapter 4). *If it's not a lean meat, it gets highlighted as an S fuel food.*

Use the space below to take quick notes for your reference.

NOTES: MY FAVORITE S FUEL FOODS

THE E MEAL

If you're familiar with low fat diet plans, then E meals will look familiar to you, but with more emphasis on slow, healthy carb sources. **Learn more about E Fuels and fill in the blanks as you read: (Original, p.77; Plan, p.39)**

E stands for _____. E meals rely on healthy, slow _____ to fuel the body. They are also centered around a healthy _____ source, but unlike S meals, E meals are _____ in fat. so it's important to use _____ meats and protein sources with E meals. You can also enjoy *any* veggie with an E meal except this one: _____.

E Fuel highlighter Challenge

In the E foods list (Original, p. 86; Plan, p. 49) highlight the foods mentioned in the E chapter as healthy sources of carbs.

Tips:

*Only four of the categories from the E food list contain E foods...**the rest are all Fuel Pull foods!** If you're having trouble picking them out, go back through the chapter and see which foods are mentioned as being healthy carb sources.

*Remember, meats don't contribute carbs, so most of the E friendly protein sources will be Fuel Pull and low carb. So even though they'll show up on your plate in an E meal, they are *NOT* an E carb source.

Use the space below to take quick notes for your reference.

NOTES: MY FAVORITE E FRIENDLY LEAN PROTEIN SOURCES:

MY FAVORITE E FUEL FOODS

MY FAVORITE RECIPES

SNACKS

Snacks are usually the hill I'll die on with a new diet, so I started out looking for some good FP snacks. They're the most versatile of all, since you can have them close to either style of meal if you get in a pinch. My faves are:

- Cut up a low carb tortilla and toast into 'crackers' and eat with some tomato slices and laughing cow light cheese...sprinkle of Greek seasoning and salt. SO yummy!
- The **Choco Pudding** (Original, p.366; Cookbook, p. 351) I make a bunch of these and store them for a week in little jelly jars in the fridge.
- The **Big Boy Berry Smoothie** (Original,p.242; Cookbook, p. 414) with or without protein powder. I omit if it's part of a meal.
- **0% Greek Yogurt** with berry syrup, or thawed berries in juice, and a bit of stevia. Or the [Luscious lemon yogurt](#)- my favorite! SO YUMMY. Or make these [Fruit on the Bottom yogurts](#) ahead for the week.
- [Cottage Berry Whip](#)
- A light cheese stick.
- [Homemade Sprite](#), or sparkling seltzer water, sweetened with Skinny Girl flavored drops or liquid orange, grape, or vanilla crème SweetLeaf Stevia extract for when I just NEED something sparkly to drink...or Zevia soda.

BREAKFAST

- [the Volcano Mud Slide Muffin](#) (Original, p. 257; Cookbook, p.274) topped with stevia sweetened vanilla Greek yogurt and berries (usually [the berry syrup](#) I make). I am so in love with this! [S]
- An omlette with your favorite fillings. My favorite is to saute some spinach until slightly wilted, and set aside, then make your omlette and fill with the spinach and either feta and fresh tomatoes with Greek seasoning, or swiss cheese and sauteed onions. [S]
- This [banana creme cake](#). [E] or [Berry cake](#) [E]
- [Lemon yogurt](#). [FP], or pair with a lovely piece of fruit to make it an [E] breakfast.
- [Fruit on the Bottom Yogurts](#)- SO yummy, and in any flavor you can dream up. Also, you can tweak them into S, E, or FP by following the directions on the printable recipe.
- Pancakes- [Trim Healthy Pancakes](#) [E] or [my \[S\] version](#) with this [Sugar free "Maple" syrup](#).

LUNCH

Usually, my husband and I eat leftovers from what I made for dinner, and the kids get sandwiches or something that they can make themselves off of the weekly lunch menu I keep on the fridge. My kids eat 100% whole wheat breads and crossover meals.

- I keep low carb tortillas and lower fat luncheon meats on hand for a quick roll up [FP or S] Depending on how much fat (mayo & cheese) you put on the roll up. If you go light on the fats, you can pair a piece of fruit with this for a delightful **E** lunch.
- Keep prewashed salad fixings on hand, and top with chopped lunch meat or grilled chicken, your favorite veggies, and dressing. You can stay FP or bump it into E or S territory depending on what you pair with it. Pearl loves to buy the pre-grilled chicken strips in the lunch meat or freezer section to keep on hand for lunch salads.
- [This E chili](#) is easy enough for a quick lunch or dinner, and is so satisfying! Try your hand at making a spice mix if you've never done it...it's SO easy, and you'll avoid the MSG in the packets.
- The Just Like Campbell's Tomato Soup (Original, p. 292; Cookbook, p. 112) is a wonderfully quick lunch as well. Alone it's an S, but make it an S helper with an open faced cheese toast made on a slice of sprouted bread. Throw in a side salad and a frappe and you've got a happy, happy tummy!

DINNER

I am used to cooking dinners, and this way of eating hasn't really changed a whole lot of what I was doing before in this department. I just switch up a few ingredients and sides to make it fit the plan. I find S dinners to be very easy to come by, so I'll mostly share our favorite E dinners, which many ladies have told me are more of a challenge.

- [Cheeseburger Pie](#) (Original, p. 326; Cookbook, p. 149) is SO good!
- [Taco Salad](#)- This is the most tasty and versatile dinner option! I'll show you how to make it into an E, an S, or even into a tasty FP dinner.
- E Pizza! Our very favorite Friday night meal is my [Cheese Pizza](#). Another summer favorite is [Easy Bread Dough Focaccia](#) made into an E white pizza, with garlic, sundried tomatoes, spinach, basil, and either use a tomato sauce or 2% cottage cheese blended until smooth. You can top with a sprinkle of parm cheese if you want. SO good! Serve with a big salad and some fat free E dressing
- Speaking of on plan Salad Dressings: For E meals, I use my [Greek dressing mix recipe](#), omitting the oil, and adding some water and glucomannan to thicken it some...or my [Ranch dressing mix](#) in 0% Greek Yogurt thinned a bit with almond milk. For S meals, I use the 'original' version of both of those recipes, made with the oil or sour cream. 😊
- An E version of my [Beef Stroganoff](#) recipe was a big hit! Served with brown rice and steamed broccoli on the side.
- [Slow Roasted Turkey](#) with brown rice, gravy, green beans, and beets. It was an E meal for my hubby and I, as we opted for white meat with the skin removed. You can also use a store bought rotisserie chicken the same exact way!

QUICK START PLAN

If you really like an outlined plan to follow, this is for you. This is a good gradual and flexible way to baby step into THM. You can gauge your own pace, but this will give you some ideas or goals to work toward, and you can tailor this to suit you.

Full disclosure: I jumped in fully with both feet and just started dog paddling as soon as I read up to the recipe section, but this is probably a smarter way to do it. If you've had experience with low carb dieting, your learning curve will be simpler than mine, and you can probably progress really quickly to being fully on plan.

WEEK BEFORE YOU START...while you're still waiting for, or beginning to read the book

- Print out the Grocery List Maker from this guide, and start tweaking your grocery list to get some things in stock. Give yourself one healthy food challenge, like "Don't buy soda this week", or "try dark chocolate instead."
- Flag your book, and write this in the front cover:

S=more than 5g of fat & less than 10g carbs

E= less than 5g fat & between 20-45 grams of healthy carbs

FP= less than 5g fat & 10g carbs.*

**Fuel Pull foods can be paired with any type of meal or snack..*

*They are the "khaki skirt" of THM. **Fuel Pull foods go with everything!***

***FP baked goods need to be less than 6 grams of NET carbs.*

*Net carbs = total carbs minus total fiber.**

Note: I know I said that THM is not about numbers and counting. It really isn't, but these guidelines are very helpful when you're first learning which food are which, and how to put together a THM meal.

- Give yourself permission to **get excited** this week as you're learning, **but not to feel guilty** over foods. You're just dipping your toes in! Find an accountability group, or online THM group or forum and spend a few minutes looking over the thread titles or files, and maybe say hello.
- Check out the Grocery Shopping List Maker to get an idea of the foods that might work for you. See if you notice any of the foods as you shop this week. Feel free to implement anything that sounds fun or easy, but remember: NO GUILT! Trim Healthy Mama is not about guilt, and [guilt is really counterproductive for healing your body and weight loss.](#)
- Browse THM recipes on the Facebook group or on [Pinterest](#). Start a list on a sticky note for ingredients that you need as you print out or pin recipes you want to try- **note which recipe they go with**. It's easy to forget why you ordered protein powder and oolong tea! :) You may want to start a binder of THM recipes that you want to try.
- Order the protein powder, glucomannan, and stevia if you are planning to use those. I found it most cost effective to just buy a few new things at a time...all of these items lasted for months for me. (See Shopping List Maker on page 33, or Resources on page 41)
- On Friday, weigh and measure, and take a front and side before picture. You don't even need to look at them. Hide them in a file on your computer. Don't be critical of yourself. You're about to do a VERY awesome thing for your body! You can do this!

WEEK 1 FOCUS: SNACKS & BREAKFASTS

- Get realistic and get excited! Don't let yourself get away with being negative or doubtful. Focus on your goals for this week, and find 2 positive things you really like about yourself. Write a note to yourself and stick it to your mirror reminding you to be positive and kind to yourself. You can do this. Prepare to succeed!
- Start by focusing on snacks and breakfasts **just for you** this week. If you live with or cook for others, I recommend just letting them do the same-old-same-old for breakfast and snacks, and then eat a normal family meal at dinner time. This allows you to adjust to the new recipes and way of life without feeling the pressure to please others.
 - Try the [Volcano Mud Slide Muffin](#) it's yummy with 0% Greek Yogurt mixed with vanilla extract, some thawed berries & stevia.
 - Try Skinny Chocolate (Original, p. 371; Cookbook, p. 377) or any of the variations [here](#)
- Browse and Print helpful docs/files from the Facebook group OR Trim Healthy Mama website, and tape them into your cabinet. Some of my favorites were:
 - Trim Healthy Mama [Sweetener Conversion Chart](#) is a must-print!
 - THM Meal Builder
 - S, E, or FP?
 - THM Foods List
 - Alternative Index (for the Original Book- not necessary with the newer books)
 - Breakfast List
 - Snack List
- Keep reading and looking things up in the Plan Appendix, or on your highlighter challenge lists as you put together your snacks and breakfasts.
I know it may feel overwhelming now, but in 2 or 3 weeks, you'll have this nailed.
- Continue stocking your fridge and pantry with THM friendly ingredients over the next few weeks.
Tip: Label containers with the food type so you can see at a glance that your 0% Greek Yogurt is an FP.
- Continue collecting, printing, or pinning recipes, and feel free to write your own personal feedback and changes on them as you go. *Note- many ladies pin recipes as inspiration that are not THM compliant. Stick with bloggers or recipe boards where they note changes and the recipe type to be on the safe side while you're learning.
These two boards are safe to pin ideas from that are truly on plan: [THM Official Pinterest Boards](#), or my group board: [Latest & Greatest Trim Healthy Mama Recipes](#)
- **Do NOT feel guilty** if you mess up and miss-match foods. It's going to happen, and *yay!* You just learned something if you figured it out.
- Post questions about things on the Facebook group, and learn how to use the search feature on a desktop or laptop: top right on the grey menu bar...looks like a little magnifying glass.

WEEK 2 FOCUS: LUNCHES & DINNERS

- Commit to eating all of your breakfasts “on plan” this week.** You can do it! Continue experimenting with breakfast recipes.
- Make more skinny chocolate. If you don't care for it, look for an 85% chocolate bar to enjoy.
- Make [a THM dessert or two](#) this week to congratulate yourself and please your family.
 - The [cheesecake berry crunch](#) (Original, p. 374; Cookbook, p. 352) is divine.
 - So are the pay off days candies (Cookbook, p. 381) or [chunky cream pops](#) (Original p. 374)
- Add in some [THM lunch ideas](#) this week. Try using low carb tortillas or lettuce leaves and learning to put together FP, or S wraps for lunch. Pop quiz: How would you turn your FP wrap into an E lunch?
- Get a bunch of pre-washed organic salad, some tomatoes and cucumbers to go in it, and splurge on a yummy sounding dressing at the grocery store that has less than 2 grams of carbs/serving.
- Go to the Facebook group files, and print [out the Dinner List](#). Tack it to the fridge.
- Make 2 dinners this week that are either S or E. Plan to eat leftovers from dinner for lunch the next day.
- If you feel up to it, plan to exercise or just get out and walk for 20 minutes on 3 days, and then DO it!
- Celebrate your first day FULLY on plan with some skinny chocolate, or a THM dessert of your choice. **YOU ARE DOING IT! I'm SO proud of you!**
- Continue using the lists in your cabinet as references, and labeling packages. You'll be amazed at how much faster you can learn with cheat sheets & visual cues.
- Weigh in on Friday and record.
- Print out my THM friendly [One Week Menu Plan](#) and look over it. This is how I mix fuels.
~or~
- Challenge! Use the free printable blank menu to make a plan to suit your family next week.

WEEK 3: EASY E'S, SUPPLEMENTS & EXERCISE

- Easy E Make Ahead: Make a BIG pot of brown rice or quinoa (I used my rice cooker for both of these), and let cool. Bag in **3/4** cups servings and freeze for convenient lunches
- Start applying the concepts you're learning to family dinners, and include a side dish to "crossover" for those not on plan in your family. ([This blog post](#) shows you one way that it can be done)
- Experiment with *at least* one new low carb veggie this week. We all love [roasted cauliflower with Parmesan cheese](#). See if you can fool anyone with these [roasted "new fauxtatoes"](#).
- Make up another BIG salad for the fridge, and splurge on making or buying a non-fat salad dressing for E and FP meals. Make one E salad this week for lunch. What carb did you add to get you into E territory?
- Find a spot to put your vitamins or supplements that will catch your eye each day. I put mine at my place at the table, or on the kitchen windowsill. Set a goal to take them daily. If you take lots of supplements, buy a vitamin organizer, and just refill it once a week. Put your bottles into a basket out of the way.
- Exercise every day, with 3 days of high intensity if you can. If you're not there yet it's OK...purpose to go for walks each day and work your way up.
- Menu plan and shop for next week. You're going to go 100% on plan!
- Weigh in on Friday.

WEEK 4: ALL THE WAY ON PLAN!

- Keep on tweaking and experimenting. Keep up the great work!
- Commit to being on plan all week for all meals and snacks. Speaking of snacks, take a few minutes and pre-prepare some favorites for the week, or jot down a shopping list to keep snacks at hand.
- Try making a batch of my [easy bread](#) or one of the spice dressing blends: [Greek](#) or [Ranch](#).
- Make your menu plan for next week. Challenge yourself to add more fruits and veggies to your day and to your weekly menu.
- Weigh in on Friday and measure.
- Take some more side and front photos and compare them to your one month ago photos. Remember that this is not about *QUICK* weight loss, but about reclaiming and sustaining your health. Congratulate yourself for your accomplishment...you've finished your FIRST month on the THM plan!
- Think about your "Non Scale Victories," and take a few notes on other benefits besides weight loss that you've experienced on THM. Share the encouragement!
- Build on your success this month as you start on month 2. What things do you feel really helped the most? What were your biggest challenges? Continue to tweak and problem solve as you go.

GROCERY SHOPPING LIST MAKER

Your first grocery store trip may be overwhelming, but don't fret! Let's walk through it together. You may have to relearn your store layout as you revamp your diet and life. There is no need to try to purchase ***EVERYTHING*** that you see mentioned in the book or on this list. **Base your purchases on recipes or foods that appeal to you this week...**this is just a list of my personal favorites or staples that I use when cooking THM style. The following are commonly available in grocery stores, and I've noted items that you may find at club style stores or Aldis.

See some of my favorite brands and items in my [Trim Healthy Amazon affiliate store](#)...there is a whole menu of categories right under my blog menu. I like being able to show you packaging, and tell you which items are worth looking for in your local stores.

Items marked FP are Fuel Pull items can be eaten with either E or S meals, or alone...they're **VERY** versatile! A few items may have a suggested serving size to keep them in FP territory...like blueberries: 1/2 c. See book for more info.

Note: get used to looking at labels for sugar, artificial sweeteners, and hidden carbs like maltodextrin. I personally don't worry about sugar in an item that has 1 gram or less per serving.

Item	Examples/Notes	Costco/Sams (Yes/No/Seasonally)	Aldis?	Fuel
Avocado		S	S	S
Low Carb Veggies - LOTS!	beets, broccoli, cauliflower, celery, eggplant, green beans, greens, lettuce, mushrooms, onions, pumpkin, tomatoes, spaghetti squash, zucchini etc. <i>Fresh or frozen will taste better than canned.</i>	Y	Y	FP
Starchy Veggies	Sweet potatoes, carrots, acorn or butternut squash. Skip any sort of white fleshed potato (no matter what the skin color on the outside).	Y/S	Y/S	E
Fruits	Anything you normally love, but choose freeze dried over traditional dried fruits for THM menus. You'll only eat bananas in moderation. Tip: Lemons show up in some of my favorite THM drinks and recipes, and are a FP addition to a recipe!	Y	Y	E
Berries	Any kind; fresh or frozen both work wonderfully. (Cherries are an E and best in moderation...they're higher in sugar.)	Y	Y	FP
Pre-washed Salad	Or any type of green. Organic is <i>*highly*</i> recommended. Prewashed means a hearty lunch salad is moments away at any time.	Y	Y	FP
Nuts	Any kind of nuts with no sugar added.	Y	Y	S

Cocoa Powder	Choosing your favorite brand will be an acquired taste, since stevia doesn't cover the bitter in cocoa very well. I like Rodelle brand from Costco.	Y (Rodelle's)	Y	FP
Coconut Flour	You can use this for making alternative baked goods like cookies and breads. It does have a coconutty flavor, IMO.	Y/S	N	S
Flax Seed Meal	Used for the Muffin in a Mug recipes . Bob's Red Mill brand works, but the FlaxUSA brand is a much finer texture.	Y (FlaxUSA)	N	S
Old Fashioned Oats	Use for making oatmeal, as well as blending to create pancakes and other baked goods. Skip the quick cook version.	N	Y	E
Xanthan Gum	This thickener is often used as a sub for glucomannan in recipes (it doesn't work well for the puddings in the book, though.) Wal-Mart usually carries it in their GF baking section in packets.	N	N	FP
Flavorings & Extracts	Get ready to explore the world of flavorings! Wal-Mart usually has a huge selection. I prefer to order natural flavorings online. (my favorites & links)	Y (limited selection)	Y (limited selection)	FP
Sweeteners	Truvia in the small tub or packets. NOT the baking blend or bagged type! Skinny Girl Stevia or Monk Fruit,	Y (Stevia Packets)	Y (Stevia Packets)	FP
Drinks/Flavorings	Zevia Sodas (SUPER sweet, in my opinion), Skinny Girl Drink flavoring drops, or Real Lemon drink tubes, Sweet Leaf Drops.	N	N	FP
Coffee	Your pick.	Y	Y	
Teas	I recommend Tetley brand for black tea. Any type of unsweetened herbal tea is on plan: Oolong- used in the Shrinker recipe Chamomile- used in apple pie sipper	Y	Y	FP
Raw Vinegar	Used to make Good Girl Moonshine . Look for Bragg brand- should be in the healthy part of your local grocer or herb shop.	N	N	FP
Protein Powder	Because it's hard to find a THM approved protein powder at a good price, I usually buy this online. But Jay Robb is a good choice, and is usually available in local stores. You want an isolate with no maltodextrin, sugar, or sucralose. Used in the smoothies, Frappa, crepes, and Anabolic Oatmeal THM recipes.	N	N	FP

Low Carb Tortillas or Wraps	Joseph's low carb products are often found in the Deli area. I really like the Ole Extreme Wellness High Fiber tortillas (Sam's has a great deal on these). I also love the Aldis' Fit & Active Flatbreads for making crackers and wraps.	Y (Extreme Wellness High Fiber at Sam's)	Y (Fit & Active Flatbread-Original or Flax)	FP
Breads & Crackers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole Grain Rye Bread (check ingredients- must have 100% rye flour!) • Wasa Rye Crackers • Sprouted bread or tortillas (freezer) 	N	Y (Rye bread)	E
Canned Goods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Light Progresso Soups -on plan and a quick lunch • Beans- any type with no sugar added • Tomato sauce for the Tomato soup recipe in the book • Spaghetti/Marinara -no sugar added. • Pizza Sauce- No sugar added • Salmon-Crabby Patties recipe 	Y (Organic tomato sauce, Marinara sauce, and canned salmon)	Y (Beans, Salmon, Marinara Sauce, & Tomato Sauce)	FP - Beans are E
Broths & Stocks	Fat free will be the most versatile. Use for making soups, stews, etc.	Y	Y	FP
Peanut Butter	Or almond butter. Look for a brand with no added sugar in the ingredients.	Y	N	S
Jelly	Any all fruit jelly like Polaner. 1 tsp for a FP or S meal, and up to a tablespoon for E meals.	N	N	FP
Salt & Spices	Sea salt, and any natural seasonings or spices are on plan.	Y	Y	FP
Condiments	<p>Mustard, light Mayo, and no sugar added Ketchup, and light/sugar free salad dressings.</p> <p>Look for no icky artificial sweeteners, and shoot for olive oil based over vegetable oil based dressings that have less than 2 grams of carbs per serving.</p> <p>I've found it easier to get good olive oil and just make high quality dressing/mixes, seasonings, and ketchup at home, because they are *hard* to find in the store.</p>	Y	Y	FP or S if more than 5 grams of fat per serving.

Coconut Oil	If you enjoy the flavor of coconut, get the extra virgin. If you dislike coconut, choose the flavorless refined version. Used to make skinny chocolate, and is featured in many recipes for baking and frying/sautéing.	Y	N	S
Olive Oil	Used to dress salads.	Y	Y	S
Brown Rice/Quinoa		Y	N	E
Dreamfield's Pasta	This is limited to once a week, and is not something that everyone uses. For those who love pasta, it really does taste like "normal" pasta! Follow package directions exactly and don't reheat.	N	N	Goes with either S or E meals
Ezekiel Bread	*Freezer Section* All but the Cinnamon Raisin is on plan. I like the Sesame. Keep it in the freezer, and just take out the slices as needed it to toast or enjoy as a sandwich.	N	N	E
Butter	The real stuff!	Y	Y	S
Unsweetened Almond Milk	Or carton coconut milk. You'll use this as a milk sub, and for making smoothies & puddings.	N	Y	FP
0% Plain Greek Yogurt	Be sure to get plain! You'll dress this up for snacks, use it as a sour cream sub, and to add bulk to baked goods.	Y	Y	FP
Half & Half, Cream, or Redi Whip Light	Use to add creaminess to coffee and recipes. Redi whip serving size is a squirt the size of the cap. The Redi Whip is FP in this serving size.	Y (all)	Y (Half & Half, Cream)	S
1/3 Fat Cream Cheese (or regular)	A must have for Cheesecake Berry Crunch.	Y	Y	S
2% or FF Cottage Cheese	I love this to make the milkshake recipes on my blog, as well as this Waldorf Salad , and the Berry Whip . Even if you typically don't like cottage cheese, it's worth trying these recipes at least once. My favorite is Daisy brand, as it's made with hormone free milk and has pure ingredients.	Y	N	FP
Light or Regular Cheeses	Light cheeses can compliment E or FP meals in garnish amounts. Laughing Cow or similar brand of spreadable cheeses are great for snacks, and are in the FP category.	Y (Cheeses & Laughing Cow Light)	Y (Cheeses & spreadable wedges)	S/FP

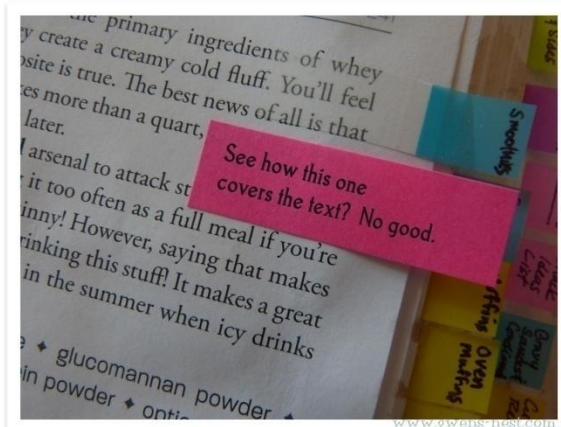
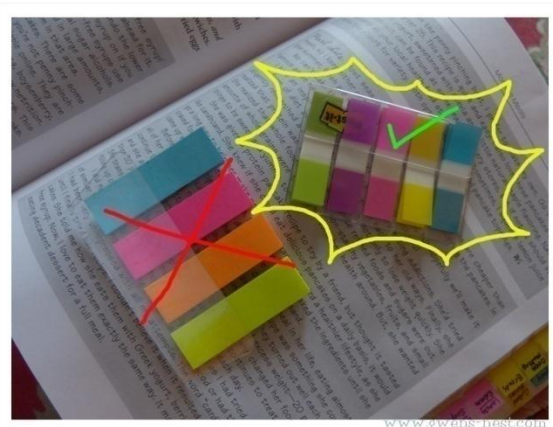
Eggs or Egg White carton	Used for breakfasts and in baking. Egg whites can be used in E or FP baking and breakfasts in recipes like the Trim Healthy Pancakes and my Frozen Eggnog Milkshake and Banana Cream Cake recipe .	Y	Y	S/FP
Meat of your choice	Red meats or dark poultry meat is used in S meals. See my chili recipe for how to use rinsed beef in E meals.	Y	Y	S
Chicken or Turkey: ground, breasts or tenders.	White meat can be used in S or FP meals. Be sure ground turkey is 96-99% lean , or count it as an S.	Y	Y	FP
Fish	Wild Caught Salmon is a hands down best choice, fresh or frozen.	Y	Y	FP
Prepared Meats of your choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bacon (regular, beef, or turkey) • Sausage- keep carb counts low • Healthier Lunch Meats • Pizza Toppings/Pepperoni • Rotisserie Chicken: use it for an S meal, and then remove the skin & use the white meat for E or FP lunch roll ups. Use remaining dark meat for S soups or meals. Pair with lots of veggies or salads. 	Y	Y	S

FLAGGING YOUR BOOK

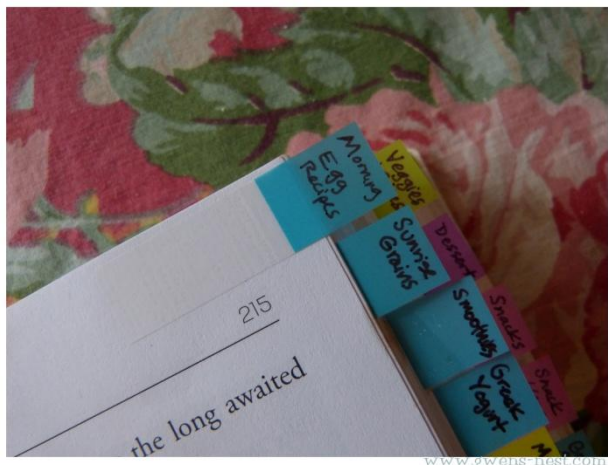
This section applies to the over 600 page original THM book. The same idea can be applied to the new books, but is not as necessary.



Flagging pages in my book has been a HUGE time saver for me in looking up recipes. All you'll need is a thinline permanent marker, and a pack of bookmark flags by **Post It**. Buy the plastic kind that have clear sticky tabs, and just have color on the ends. I first used paper tabs, and they covered up too much of the text.



THIS IS ALL YOU HAVE TO DO:



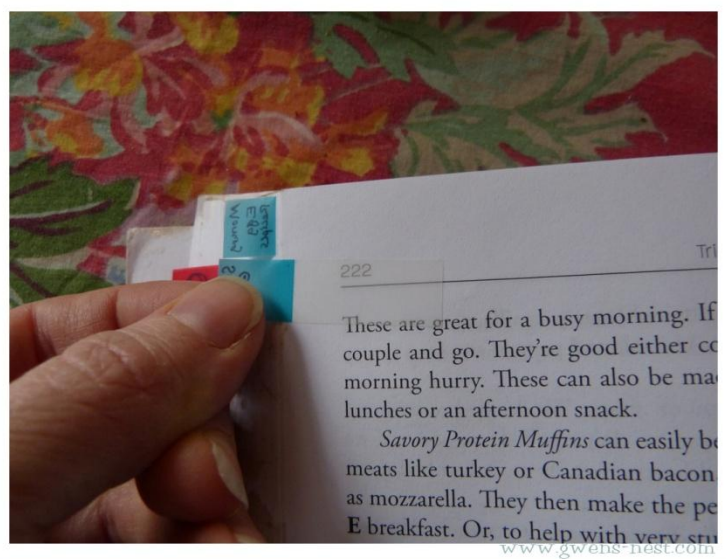
Turn to the first page in the recipe section. Write the title of your first tag onto one of the colored bookmarkers. I chose to use all the same color for each section...so all the breakfast sections are turquoise. Stick the first flag at the very top of the page.

Turn to the next section that you want to flag, and write the next title on a new flag. But instead of randomly sticking the flag on the edge, you'll want to put it onto the left hand page, positioned just underneath the previous flag, with the sticky side up. Then, just turn the right page over to cover the

sticky, and rub it in place. Easy!

You'll repeat this with each section that you want to flag. I changed color for each new recipe section to make it visually easier to see each section by color. If you end up at the bottom of the book, and haven't flagged everything yet, just put the next flag back and the top, and go down from there.

I also chose to flag the pages that have the food lists for E and S foods, and the Fuel Pull chapter. I used bigger page marker flags for this.



My book is "well loved" ...it's been splattered with choco pudding, written in, highlighted, and has lots of recipes and such crammed in it.



PROGRESS TRACKER

STARTING WEIGHT:

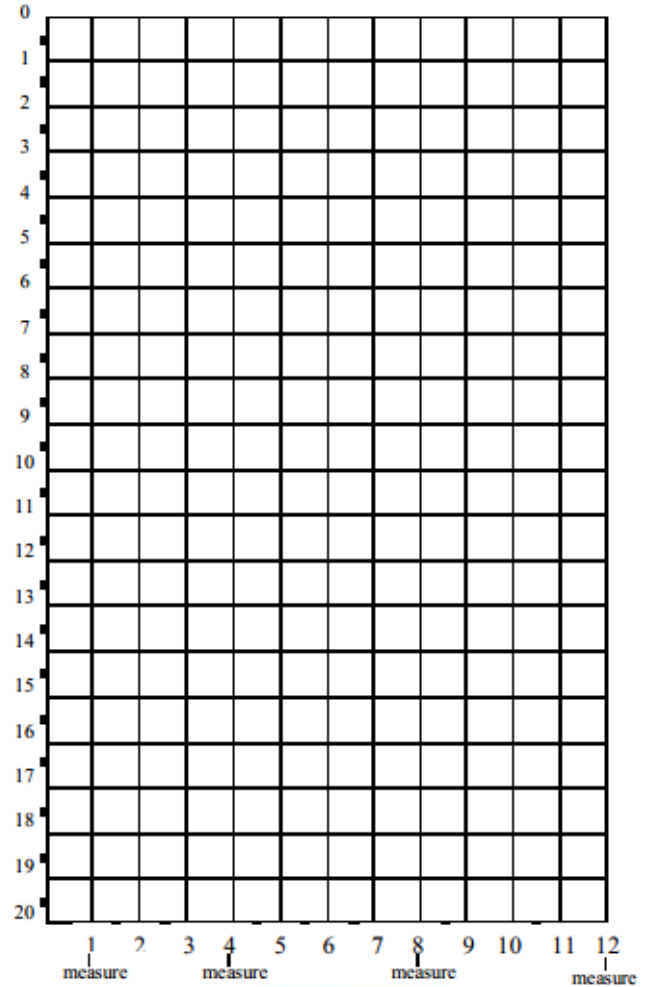
10% TARGET:

ULTIMATE GOAL:

Weight Tracking Chart

Week	Weight	Loss/Gain from Previous Week	Total Loss/Gain
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
15			
16			

Weight Tracking Graph



Measurement Chart

Month	1	2	3	4
Right Upper Arm				
Waist				
Hips				
Right Thigh				



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Check out the [Trim Healthy Mama](#) website for inspiring before & after stories and photos. Be sure to sign up for their ezine that comes out monthly and features great recipes, tips, and more.

The [Trim Healthy Mama store](#) (affiliate link) is where you'll find their yummy stevia and sweet blend, baking blend, protein powder, peanut flour, and many other fantastic products that make the plan fun and easy to do.

The official [THM Pinterest Page](#)

Need to know the nutrition content of an ingredient? I use <http://nutritiondata.self.com/>

Gwen's Nest Resources: [THM Recipes by Type](#) or [by Meal](#), [Trim Healthy Amazon affiliate store](#), my [Pinterest Boards](#) and this AWESOME [Latest & Greatest Trim Healthy Recipes](#) Pinterest board.

PRINTABLES & MENUS

This is an *easy* [one week THM starter menu](#) with no special ingredients required from Expatprep.org

I share a [one week of THM printable menu](#), a blank version of the menu maker and shopping list that I use for our family. And a one week *easy* printable [summer menu](#) here.

Don't miss Lisa's fantastic [THM Frugal Menus](#) series...she's amazing!

Some of my favorite THM bloggers

[A Home With Purpose](#) by Jennifer Griffin- delicious recipes and her inspiring weight loss story. She's a sweetheart!

[Sherri Graham](#) posts fantastic recipes, and is famous for her FP cakes made with oat fiber. There are many variations, and loads of other great recipes too.

Amanda at [the Coers Family](#) blogs about Trim Healthy Mama and has tons of great recipes.

[Briana Thomas](#) is an amazing photographer, blogger, and recipe developer. If you have a hankering for good ice cream, check out her blog! ALL of her recipes are THM compatible.

[Rohnda Sue](#) is a photographer and recipe developer who posts fantastic recipes.

Jeanine's Journal shares recipes, and her weight loss story, and some great articles. I especially love her [Flops](#) & [Hits](#) posts reviewing her results from the recipes in the book.

A very special honorable mention to Caroline from [All Day Long I Dream About Food](#)- her low carb recipes rock!

ALLERGEN FREE BLOGGERS

Jess at [Simply Healthy Home](#) has wonderful THM recipes, and many allergen free dishes.

Lisa at **Graceful Abandon** has loads of [allergen free THM recipes](#).

Amanda at **Counting All Joy** has an fantastic collection of [THM menus](#) and recipes ([S](#) and [E](#)). Most are Grain Free, Dairy Free, Paleo, SCD andn GAPS friendly.

Tina Roberts posts [dairy](#), [egg](#), [nut](#), and [gluten free](#) recipes at her blog [Anointed with Joy](#)

Raye Ann is another amazing allergen free THM blogger. [Raye's Place](#) has [whole food recipes](#), [mixes](#) and more.