

SMART SNACKING WHEN WORKING FROM HOME

ESTABLISH A HEALTHY ROUTINE

Working from home on occasion or full time requires juggling a lot of responsibilities, providing careful attention to detail, and scheduling your time to meet home and work pressures. People manage their project due dates, video calls and appointments, but can struggle to manage their own dietary habits when food is always available and just steps away in the kitchen.

SNACKS MATTER

Snacks are a given part of most people's days, whether used as a tide-over between mealtimes, as a top-up on needed nutrients, or as a replacement for meals. On average, Americans eat 2.2 snacks each day¹ and working from home can make snacks more readily available. When you make smart snack choices, that's fine. But, when the kitchen is so close to your desk or home office, there is a lot of temptation to eat empty calorie treats too often!

One of the best snacks around is almonds.

One portion of almonds, about one ounce, provides 160 calories, 6 grams of plant protein, 4 grams of filling fiber plus essential vitamins and minerals.

Almonds are a perfect addition to working from home. They're grab-and-go, with a super satisfying crunch. As a whole food, almonds can be mixed into yogurt for added plant protein, sprinkled on a salad for a boost of fiber, or enjoyed in a handful for a filling snack.



SNACK SWAP STUDY

Swapping usual snacks for healthy options like almonds may give your nutrient intake a boost.

 A modeling study² examined the characteristics of snackers/ people who eat tree nuts, including almonds, and found that **people who reported eating almonds had a higher intake of key nutrients such as dietary fiber, calcium, potassium and iron, better overall diet quality³ and lower body mass index and waist circumference** compared to non-consumers. Using data of over 17,000 children and adults⁴, researchers applied food pattern modeling to assess the hypothetical impact of replacing all snack foods, excluding beverages, with tree nuts and replacing all but "healthy" snack foods (whole grains, whole fruits and non-starchy vegetables) with tree nuts.

It's important to note that this study did not show cause and effect, but the hypothetical modeling presents a solid nutrition case for choosing a smart snack like almonds. Some study limitations include that some participants reported eating tree nuts when they may have eaten peanuts and results are based on a model, not actual participant behavior. Also, proxy reports by parents were used for children, so some foods may have been under-reported.

Good news about fat. U.S. Dietary Guidelines recommend that the majority of your fat intake be unsaturated. One serving of almonds (28g) has 13g of unsaturated fat and only 1g of saturated fat.

1. Pernas C, Popkin BM. Snacking increased among U.S. adults between 1977 and 2006. *J Nutr.* 2010;140(2):325-332. doi:10.3945/jn.109.112763
2. Rehm CD and Drewnowski A. Replacing American snacks with tree nuts increases consumption of key nutrients among US children and adults: results of an NHANES modeling study. *Nutrition Journal.* Published online March 7, 2017. DOI: 10.1186/s12937-017-0238-5
3. Measured by Healthy Eating Index scores
4. National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES; 2009-2012)

PLANNED SNACKS VS. IMPROMPTU NIBBLING

The same principles that help you balance your workload can be applied to achieve healthy eating. Approaching snacking with a plan helps you get a handle on your day and offers chances to choose healthy snacks with essential nutrients instead of nutrient-poor options.

Prepare:

- Purchase snacks like fruits, veggies and almonds. Make large batches of nutrient-packed snacks like roasted, flavored almonds or almond snack bars. (You can find tons of delicious recipes at [almonds.com](https://www.almonds.com).) Wash and cut up produce so it's ready for snacking when you are.
- You are now ready to grab a serving and have plenty for the rest of the week.

Plan:

- Create a snacks pantry or snack drawer stocked with healthy snacks that you enjoy. A similar technique can be applied for children's snacks, but best to keep at eye level to promote a healthy, easy-to-find choice.
- Each morning, select your snacks for the day to prevent all-day grazing.
- Consider putting your daily snack choices in a bowl on the counter or in the fridge, so you can select the snacks you want and stop snacking when the bowl is empty.

Manage Your Time:

- Schedule your snacks and your lunch break like any other meeting.
- This structure not only helps you take much-needed mental breaks, it also makes your eating more deliberate and less mindless.

Manage Your (Nutrition) Agenda:

- Just as you set out weekly work goals or tasks to accomplish, you can ask the same questions about your own nutrition. "What do I want to achieve? What are my eating goals for the week? What do I need to have personal success?"
- By providing specificity to your goals, you are better able to assess if you're achieving them.



DON'T FORGET OTHER HEALTHY WORKING HABITS

Hydration: Pour a pitcher, not a glass, of water. Aim to drink the full pitcher of water throughout the day while you work to stay hydrated. Add some sliced oranges or mint leaves to give plain water a flavorful twist.

Exercise time-outs: Set a timer every hour to remind you to get up from your desk chair. Go for a 10-minute walk outside or practice a few yoga stretches away from your workspace.

Screen breaks: Follow the 20/20/20 rule to avoid eye strain. Look away 20 feet in the distance for 20 seconds every 20 minutes.

Stress release: Take time out of your day to look after your mental health. Listen to a quick inspirational podcast or one of your favorite songs. Pet your dog or cat. Take some deep breaths.

Keep a food journal: Even if for just one week, writing down what foods you eat, how much and when provides valuable insights into your eating patterns (are you a morning snacker?) and potential nutrient shortfalls (too little fiber?)

INSPIRED SNACKING COMBOS

 **I ♥ Trail Mix**
Chocolate chips, dried cherries and whole almonds

 **Nutty Popcorn**
Almonds and lightly-salted popcorn

 **Strawberry Crunch**
Spread almond butter on whole-wheat crackers and top with sliced strawberries

 **Fruity Smoothie in a Flash**
Frozen berries, almond milk and honey

 **Easy as ABC Snack**
Almonds, dried blueberries and dried cherries

 **Mid-afternoon Meze**
Tapas tray with almonds, cucumbers, peppers, olives and a dollop of hummus