

The Tactical Lunch Bag: Healthy Eating - Law Enforcement Style

One area which can make a huge difference in our wellness program is our eating when on duty.

- Do you have a plan for your meals at work?
- Do you succumb to the quick and easy fix of fast food or easy to grab snack foods when we are ravenous?
- Do you constantly pick at food that people offer?

I used to be one of the officers who would spend quite a bit of money on junk food and eating crap while on duty. I felt like crap and it was no secret as I weighed over 350 pounds trying to do this job. My body ached, my demeanor was not nice and I was miserable. I was fortunate many years ago when I slowly decided to change the way I was eating and start exercising. I am in the best shape of my life today as I slowly approach the age of 50.

A great part of my success keeping the weight off has been planning out my meals when I have to work. It sounds complicated but it is simple when... you put together the items to succeed.

The best part is you get to pack a healthy meal, you know what is in the meal and it is with you in the event that you are stuck at an event or a post that you cannot leave.

- Insulated Cooler Bag: There are many different sizes, models and styles. I like the soft vinyl type which has a side pocket to store items like a fork, spoon and knife.
- Bottle of Water: A very important item to have throughout the shift especially when on patrol in all types of weather.
- Plastic Storage Containers: you can store your meals in these containers.

Here are some suggestions for you to consider eating while on duty. Keep it light, healthy and whole grain and simple. Pack some fruit, cut up vegetables, some good carbs such as brown rice, cereal or a pre-baked potato. Pack some protein items such as low fat yogurt or a cheese stick. Be creative and keep it healthy. This is fuel to keep your body energized and alert.

Try to eat whole foods and avoid the processed food packages. If you are selecting a pre-made item, read the label of ingredients. If it's long and the words are complicated to pronounce, avoid it. Try to avoid items loaded with processed sweeteners, M.S.G., sodium and other chemical additives. We need to be aware of the ingredients going into our body to maintain the proper blood sugar balance needed for long term energy.

- Thermos liquid containers: are great items for packing and taking coffee, a hot beverage or soups, the way you like it. It is with you especially when you are working overnight or it is with you when you are stuck at the event or post as mentioned above.

Keep a few items inside your locker or storage space inside your station in the event you are forced to work an unplanned overtime shift.

- Many healthy food items such as brown rice packages, beans, tuna, instant plain oatmeal, small packages of dry fruit, small bags of nuts, individual packs of peanut butter and soups are easy to store and take a moment to prepare in a microwave. Keep a small can opener, eating utensils and a microwave bowl with these items.

We train to be tactical survivors and winners in our L.E.O. roles. We need to tactically eat like a winner as well. When you make a committed plan for your meals along with a daily exercise routine, you will be the winner that YOU, your family, your co-workers and your community deserve.

REMEMBER: We are the Honorable Profession! Stay safe and be well!

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