

Mealtime makeovers

TWO BUSY MOMS TACKLED THE CHOWTIME
CHALLENGE — NOW GO SOLVE YOUR OWN

BY JESSICA ELLIOTT | STAFF WRITER

With all of life's demands, it's a struggle to get dinner on the table, let alone prepare a healthy meal.

So how can families eat right?

We offer two case studies of harried families with more than a dash of healthy advice from nutritional experts thrown in.

Short-order syndrome

After the birth of her second daughter, financial manager Samantha McKenzie was in a post-baby-weight slump. With little time to cook, the Richardson mom was struggling to strike a mealtime balance.

"I didn't want to take supplements, eat packaged meals, or cook something separate," she says. "I didn't want to be eating a Lean Cuisine while they were eating something else."

Plus she wanted her children, Isabella, 8, and Sophia, 4, to grow up making healthy food choices.

In 2009, after receiving a Canyon Creek mom's club recommendation, she sought the help of registered dietitian Angela Lemond to make a meal plan.

Before their first meeting, Lemond who is the Mommy Dietitian.com blogger and mother of two, asked McKenzie to record everything she ate for a week.

"I lost two pounds before I even saw her," she says, laughing. "I wasn't going to Burger King or McDonald's, but once I realized how big my serving sizes were, it dawned on me that I was eating more than I should be."

Lemond honed in on McKenzie's exercise regime, exact calorie goals and recommended *The Six O'Clock Scramble: Quick, Healthy and Delicious Dinner Recipes for Busy Families* (St. Martin's Griffin, \$17.95) and later, *Keep the Beat Recipes: Delicious Family Meals* National Institutes of Health, free at <http://hin.nhlbi.nih.gov/healthyeating>), which have easy-to-make, low-calorie meals that her entire family could enjoy.

"I would go to Central Market where I purchase my fish, and ask for enough for two adults and two kids. Well, I came to realize that even with something as healthy as salmon, we were eating one-and-a-half to two times the serving size," says McKenzie, 38. "I started cooking slightly differently, and paying attention to serving sizes."

She also learned to do advance prep work.

Now McKenzie tag-teams meals with husband Keith and gets cooking help from daughters Sophia and Isabella, who are working on Crunchy Chicken Fingers with Tangy Dipping Sauce and Pesto Baked Polenta.



Photos by Carter Rose \Special Contributor

