



## Locally-based Optimal Nutrition Inc. specializes in healthy customized organic meals

By Diane Welch

"Every body deserves the best," said Michelle Weinstein, president of Optimal Nutrition Inc., a local company that makes choosing healthy nutrition a breeze. "We believe that the path to living well begins with what you eat. A healthy body and mind is the result of a considered, balanced lifestyle, and the most important step in this direction is incorporating a well-planned daily nutrition program."

If living well and maintaining physical and mental health are high on your priorities, then choosing a sound nutrition plan just makes sense, added Weinstein. ONI stands out from other nutrition programs by specializing in deliciously healthy customized organic meals. Every ingredient they use in their menu is sourced fresh from the finest organic farms and manufacturers with no additives or GMO (genetically modified organism) foods, explained Weinstein. Each meal is designed and portioned specifically for a client's own body and activity level.



But perhaps the most vital ingredient in ONI's nutrition program is simplicity. "It's a no brainer," according to Weinstein who said that their individually planned menu couldn't be easier. "The food is already prepared, you don't have to shop, you don't have to cook, and you don't have to clean up!" And that is a big plus for busy people with hectic lifestyles.

With affordable prices — menus start at around \$30 a day, which includes lunch and dinner plates — the concept is catching on. Because of the customized plans — clients complete a detailed questionnaire to determine their unique nutrition goals — the program works for those who wish to lose, maintain or gain weight. The customized meals, which include handy freshly baked bars for people on the go, allow clients to eat five-six balanced meals per day. As a result, they feel "stronger, more energetic, and better prepared for the day's challenges," Weinstein said. Also provided is a state-of-the-art hydration technology and delicious smoothies that clients can mix themselves at home, ensuring the highest freshest quality.

When designing a program, Weinstein takes into account an individual's age, weight and height, activity level, basal metabolic rate and percentage of body fat. Although individual nutrition goals vary from client to client, the same level of detail goes into each client's plan. If a client wishes to loose weight, balanced meals are still important. "There still will be a certain number of carbs, proteins and fats, but we also consider calories, so portion size is a factor," Weinstein explained. Unlike fad diets, ONI's program does not eliminate food groups. Its emphasis is on health and maintaining that health. Fad diets, for example, low or no carb diets, cannot be adhered to in the long run, Weinstein said.

Born in Minneapolis, but spending her developmental years in Tuscon, Ariz., Weinstein, 28, graduated from the University of Arizona with a B.S. in business administration, with a focus on finance. Working as a financial analyst and later in the real estate and mortgage industry, Weinstein was well versed in creative business strategies. Her expertise in the business arena paved the way for the start up of ONI when she relocated to San Diego two years ago and about a year later started her corporation. She has also been a long-time fitness instructor, specializing in cycling, BOSU, kickboxing and athletic conditioning.

Weinstein's passion for healthy living grew from this personal commitment to health and exercise. Starting a business in organic nutrition was a logical next step for her. Currently, she runs her operations from her Carmel Valley office aided with a staff of seven.

ONI's head chef, Nick Shinton, shares Weinstein's passion for healthy organic food. "Nick was already eating and experimenting with organic foods himself," said Weinstein. Preferring to work in a more personalized environment though, Shinton saw the potential, as part of the ONI team, to not only reach his clients one on one, but to also educate them. "It was the right fit," Weinstein said of their collaboration. "Because we don't use a lot of oils and fats in our recipes, Nick incorporates aromatics and fresh herbs in the food preparation and our clients love this. The food is so flavorful they often ask, 'How do you make it taste so good? I wish I could do that!'"

In answering that question, Shinton also offers his services of personal cheffing. He gives one-on-one instruction to clients, giving tips on food preparation, shopping for the right kind of healthy foods and the creative use of aromatics and herbs. Shinton also stresses the benefits of eating free-range meats and fish. "People don't realize the appalling conditions that animals are raised in today. They are fed antibiotics to reduce infection, and steroids to promote growth and size," Shinton explained about cage fed, commercially raised meat and poultry. When those meats are consumed, people are ingesting those same chemicals, he added. For this reason, ONI offers only the freshest farm raised organic meats, poultry and fish.

Menu items include delicious options such as Cajun Chicken Alfredo, Sweet and Sour Chicken, Turkey Burger with Roasted Sweet Potato, and Pasta Primavera. In fact, ONI has created over 100 customized, gourmet organic meals with five meal varieties offered each week to choose from. All fruits and vegetables are farm grown locally and used as part of the meal plans only when in season to maximize freshness.

Like Weinstein, Shinton immediately noticed the difference in his own energy levels and health, when he made the switch to all organic nutrition. Choosing to no longer eat genetically engineered and chemical-laden plants, he was overwhelmed with his body's positive response. That is when he made the switch to preparing only organic raised food. "I feel privileged, proud, and gratified to work with these pure organic ingredients that enable people to lead healthier lives," Shinton said of being able to offer the same benefits to his clients.

Many of ONI's clients are athletes who need to trim down their weight while maintaining optimum energy. Shinton also incorporates natural healing ingredients like lecithin into their smoothies which promotes joint health, an added benefit for athletes. "We also have a lot of corporate executives as clients, who by their nature have busy schedules, but still need to have high energy levels," said Weinstein.

Because the food can be shipped at a low cost, ONI has clients based in Orange County, Los Angeles and throughout San Diego. A program generally runs in monthly increments and can be custom designed for the whole family. "For example, we wouldn't prepare the same portion sizes or food choices for the kids as the adults," explained Weinstein. With obesity rates being so high, nutrition is at the fore of society's consciousness and making healthy choices for the whole family makes sense, Weinstein explained.

To find out more about the nutrition programs offered by Optimal Nutrition Inc. or Nick Shinton's personal cheffing, call (858) 764 2564 or log onto the company's Web site at [www.optimalnutritioninc.com](http://www.optimalnutritioninc.com) "Habits are created over time, so if you have bad ones, those will take time to change," cautioned Weinstein, but by

making a commitment to healthy organic nutrition, "your body will love you."

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