

Kitchen essentials: Gadgets that make healthy cooking easier

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(HealthDay)—The right tools make healthy cooking so much easier. Just

a few gadgets can make all the difference.

Olive, safflower and other plant-based oils are great unsaturated fat choices, but they do add calories. Cut the amount of oil you use with an oil mister. This simple gadget delivers a fine spray of oil, perfect for dressing a salad and lightly sauteeing [food](#) in a pan. It's cheap enough that you can have one for each type of oil you cook with—just label them to avoid confusion.

A kitchen microplane is the [cook's](#) version of the common woodworking tool. These [handheld gadgets](#) come in many shapes and sizes, including one that can turn foods into ribbons. A microplane allows you to easily zest citrus fruit and turn ginger and garlic cloves into the finest mince. It's also easier to hold than a traditional box grater.

While you can snip herbs with a pair of scissors, herb mills that look like black pepper mills can give you very precise cuts. Look for a model with a built-in stripper to gently remove the leaves from [herb](#) stems.

An instant-read food thermometer is the way to be sure that you're cooking poultry, meat and even egg dishes to the right internal temperature. Use it to check the temperature toward the end of the cooking time, but before you expect the food to be fully done. In general, place it into the thickest part of the food, away from any bone, and check in a few places.

A bigger investment that could easily pay for itself is a slow cooker. This appliance allows you to add all the ingredients for a fresh meal in one pot and set it in the morning so dinner's ready when you get home.

More information: The USDA has more on [kitchen thermometers](#) and how to use them effectively.

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