

Keeping Fit this Holiday Season

Written by Story by Jennifer Wolff

Though the holiday season presents many opportunities to overstuff, turn to these tips to keep your figure from fluctuating.



The average holiday meal has enough calories for an entire day. The gluttony happens at Thanksgiving, Christmas parties, New Year's Eve, the Super Bowl—events all filled with opportunities to overstuff. Overindulgence can feel like a dent in the quest for improved health. One may attend a few events and feel derailed and that it will take months to get back on track.

There is a myth, however, regarding the amount of weight gain one experiences during the holidays. Most think it is five to 10 pounds, when actual holiday weight gain is about one to two pounds. The problem comes when these pounds aren't lost, and next year's holiday festivities add another two pounds, year after year. In a few years, 20 pounds have been added to the mid-section, hips and thighs—all thanks to the holidays.

Surprisingly, some of the healthiest foods are holiday staples. The Thanksgiving table doesn't have to be a disaster for one's diet and well-being. When choosing what to eat at parties, focus on the positive. For example, turkey breast is an excellent source of lean protein, and shrimp contains plenty of protein and is very low in fat. Almonds have protein and fat, which control blood sugar and appetite, making the nut a great snack. For something sweet, cranberries are an excellent source of vitamin C and phytonutrients while sweet potatoes contain a great amount of vitamins and fiber.

In addition to watching what one eats during holiday time, it is also important to keep active. Lia Pulver, fitness director at Camelback Village, offers tips for beating holiday bulge.

TO LEARN MORE

Village Health Clubs and Spas www.villagelubs.com.

SEASONAL STRATEGIES

1. Pick a Race to Keep You Motivated

Whether you choose a race that is in a few weeks or a few months, set a plan and stick to it. View www.active.com for events near you.

2. Don't Skip Breakfast

Not having a healthy breakfast may lead to overeating later in the day.

3. Bring Your Own Healthy Dish

Bring your own healthy entree or appetizer to the party. The host will appreciate it, and you know there'll be at least one safe choice on the buffet table.

4. Eat Small Meals

Eat regular meals and snacks every few hours until party time. You won't arrive ready to attack the appetizers.

5. Have a Beverage Strategy

Parties are full of high-calorie beverages, so keep a glass of water handy. Treat yourself to one glass of egg nog or mulled wine, and sip it slowly. Savor the taste, and then go back to water.

6. Treat Yourself

A new pair of running tights or a cozy fleece will help motivate you to go for a run.

7. Park Far

Let others stress for close parking spots. Instead, relax and park at the farthest spot. Walking is a great way to burn calories and get some fresh air.