

The York University Staff Association Health and Wellness News and Views

Yes, the holidays are upon us. From office parties to family celebrations, the holidays are times of sharing food and entertaining, however combine the festivities with -hectic shopping, a chaotic social calendar, year's-end work deadlines and the "no time to work out" syndrome, you've got a recipe for holiday weight gain. Here's how to enjoy the holiday season without it being hazardous to your waistline.

Be realistic. As we all know, excess pounds don't disappear along with the decorations. Instead of trying to lose weight during the holidays, set a goal of weight maintenance.

Stay in the zone and make fitness a priority. I like to remind people that food is only one part of the equation when it comes to maintaining a healthy weight. Exercise is just as important. Don't let your workouts go by the wayside. If anything, you should be trying to work out more than before to curb weight gain and extra eating. Just remember this: Burn it (exercise) to earn it (extra holiday calories). Schedule your workout like an appointment. You wouldn't miss work, a doctor's appointment or an important meeting to bake cookies or do some holiday shopping, would you? Add your workouts to your calendar so that other obligations don't get in the way of your gym time. Tell your friends that you'd love to attend the holiday get together but you won't arrive until after zumba class lets out.

Stress can be the operative word around the holidays, so give yourself a stress-relieving gift this year. While you're out shopping for family, friends, and loved ones find time for yourself, a half hour massage, a trip to the movies, or even just a long hot bath before bed.

Before heading through the buffet line circle around the food table so you can focus on the healthy foods you want to eat and avoid added temptation. Don't stand around the horderve table all evening when you are at a party – mingle. Focus your energy on

making conversation with others instead of focusing on food. After all, conversation is calorie-free.

If you are hosting, use that to your advantage, it puts you in control of what will be served. Choose lower fat meats like turkey breast, lean ham and/or fish. Use a gravy separator to de-fat the gravy. Use 2 egg whites rather than a whole egg when baking. Use skim milk and low fat cheeses and finally flavour with lots of herbs and spices.



Don't make mountains out of molehills. With office lunches and evening holiday celebrations it's easy to go over your calories one day and feel like a failure. Expect to overeat somewhat, and cut back on eating the day before or after. Remember that it takes much more than one day of overeating to thwart your progress. Accept your slip-ups, learn from them and move on.

Before you reach for the eggnog, remember that some mixed drinks can have as many calories as a decadent dessert. It's okay to indulge in some holiday spirits just remember to pace yourself, drink water or selzer between drinks and consume mixed drinks with club soda when possible.

Don't lose control this holiday season, no matter how hectic things get you are in control, so stay strong and stay healthy.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

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