

The York University Staff Association Health & Wellness News & Views

Traditionally Christmas is a time for celebrating with family and friends. It's also a time traditionally linked to overindulgence, weight gain, and stress. The Christmas whirl of social gatherings, office lunches, travel plans, house guests, and family obligations along with the abundance of rich foods and holiday spirits often of the alcoholic variety can easily have a detrimental effect on our health. Well we are all for indulging a little over Christmas, it can be easy to get carried away. You can still enjoy all the festivities of the season and get through the Christmas holiday without too much impact on your health and waistline. Try these tips for a healthier happier Christmas.

Planning ahead for Christmas can make the difference between fun and failure. Those who don't plan ahead often over-spend, over-schedule and/or over-indulge. The result, debt, stress and holiday chaos. Make a list and check it twice, shopping, holiday gatherings, baking, decorating etc. Prioritize the list according to what is important, and what can wait. Stick to those priorities. Best of all, planning the holiday season early allows you to actually enjoy the season fully secure that your spending, activities, traditions and celebrations are those that truly reflect what is important to you.



Christmas celebrations need not only focus around food and drink. Why not try an advent calendar filled with amazing activities and events. A family game night, a winter walk or snowshoe, build a snowman or snow angel, an outdoor football game, a local Santa Clause parade, or Christmas caroling around the neighbourhood. Share with family and friends the most precious Christmas gift - memories.

When the Christmas season strikes once busy gyms look like ghost towns and gym bags lay dusty at the door as their owners drink sparkly cocktails and eat their weight in goodies ;) (kidding of course). One mistake people often make is that they stop exercising completely over the holidays. Make fitness a priority placing it at the top of your 'list'. After all, no one wants to shake their belly like a bowl full of jelly. Besides the big guy in red of course. Given everyone's busy holiday schedules, swap longer workouts for high intensity shorter sessions. Circuit training and interval training with weights are both highly effective ways to get the most out of a short workout. Skipping, planking and other body weight exercises are also effective. Make your workout festive and add a little bit of extra magic by making a Christmas playlist full of your favourites. Feel free to sing out loud I am sure those around you will know the words.

Struggling with what to get a loved one for Christmas this year? Consider giving the gift of health so your friends and family can enjoy the benefits of feeling better, having more energy and looking great too!

A gym membership or paid in advance fitness class of their choice. A series of lessons/classes (Pilates/Ballroom Dance)
Personal training session
Personalized Exercise mat
Pedometer
Fitness watch
Gym towel and water bottles (customized with initials)
Fitness bag
DVDs - Exercise (i.e. P90X or insanity)
Dumb bell weight set
Pull-up bar

In-line Skates
Jump rope
Foam roller
Workout clothes
A Juicer
A Blender
Tea set (with variety of teas)
Tea of the month club membership
Cookbooks
Cooking classes
Food steamer
Health magazine subscription
A massage

I wish you all a very Happy, Healthy and of course
Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Kerriane Brown

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Happy Shopping!!!

Christmas is notoriously a time to indulge, but don't let this be the green light to overindulge, and definitely don't doom your diet by going "cold turkey". Stay positive. We all know the classic saying "everything in moderation" That is to say, go to the parties. Eat the food. Drink the champagne. Then avoid alcohol and eat clean on non-party days. Find a good vitamin B complex to replace what the booze may have depleted. Go for a walk. And remember, leftovers are the best part of any festive meal, so there is no need to eat everything on the table in the first hour. Eat a small amount and have seconds later. Everything in moderation, including moderation.

A little vigilance, moderation and common sense will go along way this season. Enjoy the Holidays. And if you overindulge a little a New Year is a new start. Treat it as such.