

Holiday Survival Guide:

How to Get Through the Holidays With No Regrets

Let's face it: it is hard to stick to a healthy eating and exercise plan during the holidays. Everywhere we turn there are tempting foods and drinks—from treats at office parties to our own traditional family favorites. When you add in a busy schedule filled with shopping and get-togethers that make it tough to squeeze in exercise, you have a recipe for disaster as far as our scales are concerned.

The good news is that you really can get through the holidays without gaining weight. It will take some effort, but you will thank yourself a thousand times when January 1st rolls around and you have no regrets!

Your Goal: Maintenance

In order to greet the New Year without tipping the scale, it is wise to try to maintain your weight during the next few weeks instead of trying to lose. Remember: you want to enjoy the holidays, not be miserable from deprivation. This means that you will allow yourself occasional treats and splurges and keep the scale where it is rather than trying to actually decrease your weight.

There are several ways to accomplish this:

- **Don't skip your workouts.** Even moderate intensity workouts can burn 300-400 calories per hour. You need this calorie-burn to keep up with the richer food that you will be eating. You will also be less likely to overeat if you have just sweated through a hard workout!
- **Eat breakfast.** People who eat breakfast consume fewer calories throughout the day than those who skip this important meal.
- **Keep a food diary.** Write down every single thing you eat—even if it is only one bite of shrimp cocktail. It is a proven fact that keeping a food journal results in better weight control than not keeping one.
- **Monitor your hunger.** Never show up at a party or buffet ravenous—you will most certainly overeat. Drink water and have a protein-filled snack (such as nuts or cheese) before arriving. This will help you to have more self-control around the temptations.
- **Weigh yourself twice each week.** Normally it is not a good idea to step on the scale too often, but during the holidays it's a great way to stay on track with your goals. If you see the scale start to creep, you can immediately take steps to correct it, such as backing off your calories for a day or two, drinking more water and adding in a little more exercise.
- **Watch your portion size.** If you have an idea of how much food you are putting on your plate, you will be less likely to overdo it. Take a look at the chart to familiarize yourself with portion sizes as they compare to your hand.

- **Deal quickly with leftovers.** If you have unhealthy leftovers in your home, you are likely to indulge. Don't leave them sitting around. Freeze them, give them away or toss them. It's not worth the temptation!
- **Check in with your future self.** Every day, speak to yourself from the future—say, from January 1. Thank yourself for doing the tough work of self-discipline during these holiday weeks. You might say something like this:

“Thank you! I feel great! I’m no heavier than I was in November, I’ve stayed on track with my exercise, my energy is incredible and I’ve got the momentum to spend the rest of the winter getting in even better shape before spring gets here!”

- **Go public.** Sound scary? It's supposed to! Let others know what your current weight is and check in with them each time you weigh yourself. That kind of intense accountability will give you will power when the cheesecake and fudge starts showing up at the office!

You can survive the holidays with no added weight gain. Remember these tips and keep a vision of what you want to feel like on January 1 in mind. It's going to be a great holiday season!



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