



Holiday Wellness

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Fit in exercise during the holidays

Don't wait until New Year's to set your fitness goals. There are ways to sneak in exercise while you're busy this holiday season.

Shopping, cooking, eating, drinking, parties, family gatherings and more all help define the holiday season. Hectic schedules – combined with cooler temperatures and fewer daylight hours – may mean that your exercise routine has been bumped from your weekly lineup.

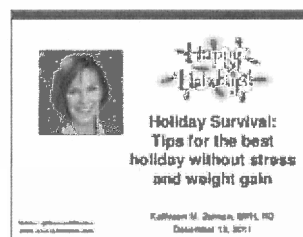
A little exercise can go a long way during the holidays. The season can be full of cheer, but it can also be full of stress. Exercise is one thing you can do to take care of yourself during the holiday season – and year-round. Other things that help take care of you: a healthy diet and plenty of sleep.

Not only does exercise help reduce stress and anxiety, it can boost your energy levels. Regular exercise can also help keep your weight in check in the long run. Talk with your doctor before starting a new exercise routine and to see what kind of exercise is right for you.

Here are a few tips to help keep exercise on your holiday “to-do” list.

Plan ahead. Schedule a workout session on your calendar like you would a work meeting or a social event. But be flexible with your workout plans.

- Have a holiday celebration to attend after work during your normal exercise time? Plan to wake up early that morning and hit the gym. Or, spend your lunch break walking the halls of your office or the parking lot or climbing stairs.
- Traveling to visit family? There's no need to put your fitness plans on hold until you return home. Before your departure, check the hotel's website for fitness facilities, browse the town's website for walking paths or parks or ask a family member if you could get a guest pass to their gym.



Online recorded seminars:

[Best Holiday Ideas](#)

[How to Survive the Holiday Season](#)



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Break it up into short sessions. Adults should aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic exercise each week. Add some muscle-strengthening exercises in at least twice a week as well. But when your calendar is full, it's unrealistic – and stressful – to try to set aside a block of time to work out. Instead, scatter shorter bursts of activity throughout your day, whenever you have spare time. As long as you're active for 10 minutes continuously, it counts as exercise.

- Do you have to take your child to and from a holiday pageant rehearsal? Find a nearby park, an empty hallway or a nearby gym and work out there while he or she is practicing. Do sprints, jumping jacks and lunges.
- Have some downtime before you need to board your flight? Power walk around the airport terminal.

Multitask. Instead of letting exercise slide when you have too many commitments, try to be active and cross “to-dos” off your list at the same time.

- Get up from the table. After a meal, instead of sitting there and looking at the leftovers, offer to help do the dishes. It will get you moving – and will help you avoid picking at the food. Plus it allows others to enjoy the celebration!
- Spending the day shopping? Park as far away from the store as you can, so you can get in a few more minutes of walking. Go for the steps over the elevator or escalator when you have the option.

Create new traditions. Your favorite holiday memories may include baking cookies with mom or watching football with dad. Now is your chance to make holiday traditions for your family that focus on fitness.

- Take children ice skating or sledding. Don't just supervise them – join in on the fun!
- Instead of revolving your holiday celebration around a meal, plan it around an active event. There are short “turkey trot” and “jingle bell jog” races all over the country. Find a local one and encourage your family to run it with you. The registration fees for many races support charities.

Be realistic. Many people are busiest during the holiday season than during any other time of the year.

- The holidays aren't the best time to set out to achieve a big fitness goal. Save trying to run your fastest race or losing 10 pounds for when you have fewer commitments. This way you won't set yourself up for failure.
- Plan to maintain your current fitness level and weight during the holidays. If you want to do more – save it for when you're not as busy and you can focus on your goals.

If you miss a workout or two – don't stress about it. Cherish the time you're spending with the people you care about and enjoy the celebration. When things calm down again, your exercise routine will be waiting for you.

10 Holiday food safety tips

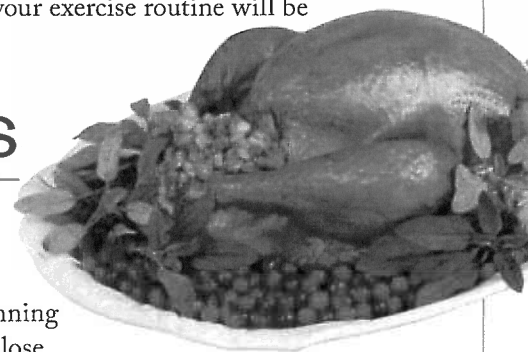
When prepping a scrumptious holiday feast, don't forget the rules of food safety.

While you are making your holiday grocery list – and checking it twice – don't forget about one of the most important ingredients: food safety. Just like any other key item, your festive feast could be ruined without it.

Harmful bacteria grow and thrive on foods that are not safely prepared, cooked, or chilled. If you eat food contaminated with these germs, you could get food poisoning. And, feeling sick is no way to spend the holidays. Common germs that cause foodborne illness include *E. coli*, *Campylobacter*, *Salmonella*, and *Staphylococcus aureus*.

Spending time planning ahead and paying close attention to detail, you can be food safe this holiday season. Follow these tips:

1. **Buy your turkey or ham at the right time.** Do not buy fresh turkey or ham too far in advance. If you buy frozen turkey, set aside enough time for it to thoroughly thaw in the refrigerator. Follow these guidelines:
 - *Fresh turkey* should be purchased one to two days before you cook it. Keep it refrigerated.



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- *Frozen turkey* takes 24 hours per four to five pounds to thaw in the refrigerator. A 10-pound frozen turkey will take two to three days to thaw in the refrigerator before it can be cooked.
 - *Fully cooked ham* should be eaten by the “use-by” date on the package. If there is no date, eat it within three to five days of purchase.
 - *Cook-before-eating hams* should be cooked and eaten within seven days of purchase.
2. **Thaw properly.** Food should never be thawed on the kitchen counter. Thaw in the refrigerator or in cold water. To thaw in water, keep the meat in its original packaging or place it in a leak-proof bag. Fully submerge the food in a clean pot or pan containing cold water. Change the water every 30 minutes. Cook the food right away after it’s thawed.
 3. **Clean your hands and surfaces.** Wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds before you prepare any food. Wash your hands again after handling uncooked foods. Make sure all utensils, dishes, and surfaces are clean, too.
 4. **Separate.** To avoid cross-contamination, keep uncooked foods separate from ready-to-eat foods. Use one cutting board for raw meats and a different one for produce. Always use a clean plate for cooked foods, not one that previously held uncooked meat.
 5. **Use a food thermometer.** Cooking foods to a safe internal temperature kills harmful bacteria. You cannot tell if a food is done cooking just by looking at its color. A food thermometer is a necessity. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) says holiday foods are safe to eat at these temperatures:

Turkey and other poultry	165 degrees F
Fully cooked hams	May be eaten cold or reheated to 140 degrees F
Cook-before-eating hams	160 degrees F
Beef	145 degrees F (Ground beef to 160 degrees F)
Lamb	145 degrees F (Ground lamb to 160 degrees F)
Pork	145 degrees F
Stuffing (Cook in a casserole dish, not inside the turkey, for optimal safety.)	165 degrees F
Egg dishes, including eggnog (Eggnog should be cooked first, and then cooled in the refrigerator. Never eat uncooked eggs.)	160 degrees F
Cream or custard pies	160 degrees F
Leftovers	Reheated to 165 degrees F

6. **Never partially cook foods.** Partial cooking puts foods in the “danger zone.” The danger zone is the temperature range where bacteria thrive, between 40 degrees F and 140 degrees F.
7. **Serve food safely:**
 - *Use several small trays* to serve your guests, instead of using a large one. Keep extra food hot in the oven or cold in the refrigerator until ready to serve. Use a new tray when serving more food instead of replenishing existing platters.
 - *Keep hot foods hot.* Hot items should be kept at 140 degrees F or hotter. Keep these foods hot by serving them in chafing dishes, warming trays, and slow cookers.
 - *Keep cold foods cold.* Place cold foods in dishes that are surrounded by ice.
8. **Chill promptly.** Food should not sit out at room temperature for more than two hours (or one hour if the temperature is over 90 degrees F where it is being served). Refrigerate leftovers right after serving.
9. **Store food in shallow containers.** Divide leftovers into shallow containers before you put them in the fridge or freezer. This will allow the food to cool quickly and evenly.
10. **Safely enjoy leftovers.** Leftovers are only safe to eat for a few days after being cooked. Eat or freeze leftovers within three to four days. When reheating food in the microwave, make sure the entire portion is hot. And, only reheat the amount of food you will eat. Repeated heating and cooling encourages bacteria to grow.

How to keep your heart healthy and your waistline trim at holiday meals

Trimming the fat, eating fruits and vegetables, and increasing exercise can help keep you healthy at holiday meals.



Holiday meals, with turkey or ham and all the fixings, can turn the dining room table into a high-fat smorgasbord. As tasty as they are, these feasts can make your arteries groan. The typical holiday meal is laden with fat: gravies made with meat drippings, mounds of creamy mashed potatoes, your favorite pies.

In fact, American adults usually gain one to two pounds each year, including slightly less than one pound during the holidays alone.

That gradual weight, year after year, can raise your risk of serious health problems, such as diabetes, arthritis, and cardiovascular disease.

Studies also show that fats - especially those found in fatty meats and cheeses, vegetable shortening, margarine, and some oils - can clog the arteries and contribute to heart disease.

Transforming high-calorie holiday fare

A traditional holiday dinner of turkey, stuffing, other dishes, and desserts can exceed 2,500 calories and 130 grams of fat. That's just for one meal. This is more calories and fat than you should consume in a whole day.

But, there are ways to de-fat holiday meals and keep your arteries and your taste buds happy. Here are some tips:

De-fat your gravy. Two tablespoons of regular gravy contain about 4 grams of fat - and most people pour on more than that. Try pouring meat drippings into a container ahead of time and then refrigerating. The fat rises to the surface so you can peel it off.

Un-stuff the stuffing. One benefit of this is that the stuffing does not absorb all the fat from the

bird. Also, the inside of the bird gets cooked more thoroughly, killing any salmonella that may be present. Also, try adding nuts and fruits instead of sausage or turkey giblets in your stuffing.

Nix the butter. Try adding a little brown sugar, cinnamon, and nutmeg to your sweet potatoes instead of butter. Bake them in a nonstick baking pan.

Remove the skin. A 3 1/2-ounce serving of roast turkey breast with skin has 197 calories and 8.3 grams of fat. Without skin, it has 157 calories and 3.2 grams of fat.

Make a single-crust pie. There's no rule that a pie has to be double-crust. Most of the fat in pies is found in the crust. Roll the crust a little thinner if you use a store-bought crust. Fruit pies are lower in fat than a pecan pie.

Bring out the fruits and vegetables. Focus on pumpkin, carrots, sweet potatoes, or other orange vitamin-packed vegetables. Greens such as broccoli, spinach, and collard greens all pack vitamin power too. Serve colorful raw veggies with low-fat dip as an appetizer.

Make smart substitutions. Use fat-free, low-sodium chicken or vegetable broth to moisten dressing. Use olive oil in place of butter or margarine. Mash potatoes with nonfat sour cream and low-fat milk. Use fat-free nondairy creamers or evaporated skim milk instead of cream when you bake.

Don't starve yourself until dinner. Have a healthy breakfast so you don't load up at the big meal. When you sit down to eat, try just a little bit of everything and go easy on second helpings and dessert.



The benefits of exercise

Take a walk after dinner, or exercise sometime during the day to help offset meal calories.

Always check with your doctor before you increase your activity level, especially if you have medical problems or have been inactive.

So, enjoy your meal, but prepare it with less fat and walk it off afterwards. Your arteries and your waistline will thank you.

Surviving holiday meals: Dos and don'ts for people with diabetes

Tempting treats and hectic schedules make it hard to manage blood sugar levels. Here's how to stay healthy without losing out on the holiday cheer.

Roasted turkey, mashed potatoes with homemade gravy, and pumpkin pie. There's no doubt about it, 'tis the season for eating.

But enjoying the delectable treats of the holidays can be tricky for people with diabetes. You desire to dig into grandma's stuffing and mom's gingerbread cookies, but you worry about the toll on your blood sugar.

Holiday highs and lows in blood sugar can occur for other reasons besides overindulging. Between time spent traveling, shopping, and mingling at holiday parties, it's tough to stick to your normal eating schedule. You may also be too busy to keep up with your regular exercise routine. This can all create bedlam with your blood sugars.

Holiday tips

With a little planning and some willpower, you can enjoy the season and keep your blood sugar levels under control. Here's how:

The don'ts

- **Don't deprive yourself.** Completely avoiding the deviled eggs or apple cobbler may only make you more likely to overeat later. If you really want something, have it, but limit yourself to one small serving.
- **Don't graze.** It can be easy to eat too much when hors d'oeuvres are being passed around, there's a buffet, or small bowls of nuts and candies are found on each table. Instead of grazing, fill one small plate with food. Wait awhile, and only go back for seconds if you're still hungry.
- **Don't focus the holidays on food.** Instead, spend time with your family and friends doing other things. Consider volunteering, playing a game of football in your backyard, running or walking a local race, or going to a craft show together.
- **Don't drink your calories.** Punches, eggnog, and alcoholic drinks are often high in sugar and calories. Choose water or seltzer instead.
- **Don't feel guilty.** If you eat too much, don't dwell on your slip-up. Just get back on track as soon as you can. Eat well and pay extra attention to your blood sugar readings the next few days.

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The dos

- **Talk to your doctor or diabetes educator before the holidays.** If your diabetes is under control, you may have more leeway with your diet. In some cases, your doctor may want to adjust your medication schedule or dosage.
- **Make a healthy dish.** If you're preparing something, make it healthy. Replace regular cheese, milk, or sour cream with their reduced fat or nonfat versions. In baked goods, swap out oil for applesauce.
- **Fill up on healthy foods.** Eat fruits and vegetables first before you move on to other foods. Or, have a healthy snack at home before heading to a holiday party. You won't be as hungry when you arrive.
- **Try to stick close to your normal schedule.** Don't "save up" your calories for a dinner party. Instead, eat as close to your normal time as possible. If you normally eat dinner at 6 p.m. and the party is not until 8 p.m., still eat a healthy meal at your regular dinner time and only have a little taste later.
- **Squeeze in bursts of exercise.** You may not have time to hit the gym, but there are other ways of getting spurts of activity in throughout the day. Walk around your office during your lunch break, take the stairs, and park far away. At holiday gatherings, encourage friends and family to take a walk with you before or after dinner. Talk with your doctor first before you increase your activity level.

