

## Staying Festive and Fit During the Holidays

Are you wondering how you will handle the challenges of being confronted with mountains of delicious food, endless parties, and crazy schedules? This can often be stressful and cause you to want to give up.

If all this sounds familiar, your first step is to change your mindset. Practicing sound nutrition, health and fitness habits is vital to life-long wellness. Healthy eating, effective physical activity and regular rest are practices that should become part of who you are and essential to your daily life, just like brushing your teeth or taking a shower. This shift in mindset sets the stage for greater self-empowerment and self-confidence, as well as a transition in locus of control from external to internal.

The key is to recognize that you have the power to transform your life and live it to the fullest during the holidays and festivities by applying key foundational behavioral principles. When you do that, you won't get bogged down with seemingly endless challenging choices in every situation.

If you make the following key tips a priority, circumstantial, seasonal, and unexpected events won't have the power to derail you. Each holiday fit tip showcases an example of how you can apply these behaviors in real situations and stay fit over the holidays.

**1) Drink water.** Choose to drink water over anything else. Cold or hot herbal teas are a good option, too. Drink two cups of water when you first wake up in the morning and when you feel hungry outside of your regular mealtime/regular snacks. ***Fit Tip:*** *When you arrive at a holiday party, drink two cups of water or herbal tea before you start eating.*

**2) Move more, sit less.** If you have the option of standing versus sitting, stand. If you have the option of walking versus driving, walk. If you have the option of moving about versus standing, move about. Daily physical activity and structured exercise, including cardio, strength, and flexibility exercises, are a part of a healthy daily routine. ***Fit Tip:*** *When you attend a holiday party or an event, find a way to avoid sitting for most of the time (move about the room, start a dance party, etc.).*

**3) Something positive is better than nothing.** Get away from an all-or-nothing mindset. If you don't have time for a full workout, do 10 minutes of exercise and you'll reap some positive benefits. If you forgot to add any fruits or vegetables to your meals during the day, add an apple at night. Apply this principle where it makes sense. ***Fit Tip:*** *Focus on nutritious foods during the holidays rather than on what you shouldn't eat. Each time you eat at home or at a holiday party, add things to your plate that are good for you, such as vegetables, fruit, nuts or other healthy proteins or grains.*

**4) Take control.** Focus. Reflect. Ask yourself: Is this behavior good for me? Be mindful. Choose wisely. Follow-through. ***Fit Tip:*** *When you are at a party and about to fill your plate with all the goodies from the buffet, pause and ask yourself: Is it time to eat now? What have I already eaten today? What is available here that is considered healthy?*

**5) Half is enough.** Eat only half of the less-nutritious foods on your plate. If you take a cookie, for example, eat half of it and pack the other half for another day. ***Fit Tip:*** *At a holiday party or event, serve yourself only half of what is on the serving platter. For example, if you want a brownie, cut it in two on the serving platter and only serve yourself half (and don't go back for seconds).*