

Happy Holidays Guide

Healthy Holiday Tips –

Try "3" A Day!

"It's the most wonderful time of the year...."

The holiday season is upon us! Yes, it is the most wonderful time of the year—festivities, food, family, friends—but it can also be an extremely stressful time of year. Often, important aspects of caring for ourselves get overlooked during this busy time of year, resulting in holiday weight gain, holiday blues and holiday stress.

Three areas of health are particularly challenged during the hectic holiday season: exercise, stress management, and healthy eating. Research shows that just by practicing one health-related activity in each category daily, you can become healthier and happier.

So, here's a simple plan to get you through the holidays in great health: select 1 healthy activity from the 3 categories of health that often get overlooked. Do this daily and write down the 3 activities each day on the calendar. At the end of the holiday season, reward yourself with a special present just for you!

Exercise – do one activity each day

- Walk around your neighborhood to see the decorations
- At the mall, walk one time around to "window shop" before actually shopping
- Park further away from

the store—not only will you use extra calories walking to the store, you will reduce your stress of finding a close parking space!

- Make multiple walking trips to your car to stow your packages during a day of shopping
- Use stairs only, no elevators or escalators, while shopping or in your office building
- Hand deliver your greeting cards to your neighbors and co-workers instead of mailing them
- Wear a pedometer daily and strive for 10,000 steps a day
- Put holiday music on and dance for 30 minutes with your loved ones
- Go ice skating!
- Dance—a lot!—at a holiday party
- Pack exercise clothes and shoes for trips to see family and friends so that you can work out wherever you are
- Rake all the remaining leaves in your yard
- One hour before a party, exercise—it will take the edge off your hunger

Healthy Eating – do one activity each day

- Substitute applesauce for oils in baked goods
- Send leftovers home with your guests
- Use a small plate at holiday parties and fill it only once
- Try to get all the holiday colors on your plate from

fruits and vegetables: red/green (tomatoes, broccoli); gold (squash, pumpkin); silver (silver corn); blue (blueberries, grapes)

- Buy whole grain breads and rolls for your holiday parties so that you and your guests get the most fiber and B vitamins
- Eat homemade soup to get the most nutrients from one meal
- Replace cream with evaporated skim milk to use in sauces, casseroles and even whipped for pumpkin pie
- Don't make food the focal point of your event—balance it with games or other fun activities
- Sip alcohol slowly, drinking a glass of water between each serving of alcohol
- Be selective in your food choices at a party—pass on the foods you can eat day of the year, and focus on seasonal foods
- Reduce the sugar in holiday recipes by 25% and add vanilla, cinnamon or nutmeg to increase flavor
- Edge out hunger before a party—eat a piece of fruit or toast
- When you want to stop eating at a party, pop in a piece of gum or strong breath mint
- For a sit-down gathering, the trick is to savor your meal. Have a small first helping, drink water to help slow you down, and make a

point of jumping into conversations so that you will eat at a more leisurely pace

- Shopping on an empty stomach may tempt you to buy calorie-laden mall food, so make sure you leave the house well-fed and take a healthy snack
- The body often confuses thirst with hunger, and it's easy to forget to drink water when you're dashing from store to store, so carry water with you when shopping

Stress Management – do one activity each day

- Start your morning with a brisk outdoor walk, even if it's just for 10 minutes—it's a great way to get you in a positive mind set for the day ahead. If possible, try to walk first thing in the morning—the morning sunlight will help boost serotonin so you'll feel good.
- Turn your cell phone off and curl up with a good book or relax with a warm bath at the end of a strenuous day at work or fighting the shopping crowds
- Get a massage
- Keep a diary of stressful or frustrating situations. Note what happened, what you thought, what you felt, how you reacted; then, look for patterns and come up with at least 3 positive solutions
- Be sure to get plenty of rest—go to bed earlier rather than sleeping

later

- Learn to praise the things you like in others—avoid criticizing, and instead focus on the good qualities in others
- Take a yoga class or try a yoga video
- Keep a gratitude journal, writing down each night what you are grateful for as you review your day
- If you practice a hobby regularly, make sure that you continue to set aside time during the holiday season to continue with it
- When shopping, make a list of people you are shopping for and assign a dollar amount that you will stick with
- Don't be afraid to ask friends and family for gift ideas instead of putting stress on yourself to get the perfect gift for them
- Ask for, and make sure you get, 3 hugs every day

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