

## Staying Slim during the Holiday Season

### Guide to Staying Slim and Trim during the Holiday Season



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## INTRODUCTION

What is it about the holidays that make it such a tough time to lose or even maintain weight? Of course, there's the over abundance of delicious food everywhere we turn. But there's also the factor of personal outlook. It's very possible that you perceive it as a free ride on the food train. All year you deprive yourself just to eat richly around the holidays. Well, maybe we aren't exactly depriving ourselves during the rest of the year, but we do look forward to the food that is served at Thanksgiving and Christmas.



For some reason, everything tastes better in November and December. It could be the fact that family and friends are gathered around that changes our perception of the taste of things. Let's face it, most special occasions and get togethers center on food. It is a proven fact that eating comfort food releases endorphins, those "good feeling" substances in the body. What does that mean? Eating comfort food makes you feel better. Even in hard times, things seem more manageable over a plate of macaroni and cheese or turkey with stuffing.

But, during the holidays, it is not the food that makes you happy it is the company. Focusing on the food will lead to overeating which is what happens to just about everyone during the holidays. Your eyes are almost always bigger than our stomachs and you'll develop the expanding waistline to prove it.

So what can you do? Holidays are full of activity: games, parties, gift exchanges, church functions. It's obviously not an easy task to get away from scrumptious desserts and fat-laden foods.

To combat the constant your constantly tempting surroundings during the holidays, make a pact with yourself this year to continue the battle of the bulge. Don't let the holidays derail you so severely that the first half of the year is spent losing weight accumulated in a month's time. Besides being depressing, it is not the healthiest way to live.

In this report we will discuss how anyone can avoid the thirty pound holiday blues with a few simple tips. We will touch on the topics of:

- \* Thinking thin from the beginning
- \* Get moving with exercise
- \* Strategies to start off strong
- \* The necessity of partners
- \* Weight management skills
- \* Party tips
- \* Dinner eating tips

## IN THE BEGINNING

### Think Thin

Your actions begin in the mind. What you think influences what you do. Losing weight is a difficult task to accomplish. Keeping it off is just as hard. **Arming yourself with knowledge** is one way to watch out for dangerous pitfalls especially around the holidays.

Begin by learning about food. Pick up a book at the library or the bookstore. The important information to look for is anything you can find about proteins, fats, and carbohydrates. These are the nutrients that make up each food that we eat.



**Proper nutrition comes when these nutrients are eaten in the right proportion.** According to experts, a 40-30-30 split is best. The larger part is protein, followed by carbohydrates, and finally fats. **It is a common misconception that cutting all fats will help us to be slim and trim.**

The body needs a certain amount of fat each day. The trick involves getting the right kind of fats. Unsaturated fats are the better choice. The worst kind of fat is trans fat. It is liquid fat like margarine that is chemically turned into a solid form.



After you accumulate knowledge, **start reading food labels.** The numbers there will now make a whole lot more sense. Reading labels lets you know what is in the foods you eat and prepare for others. A food diary can help you know what types of foods are eaten throughout the day. You can get a free online food journal (with analysis) at [www.FitDay.com](http://www.FitDay.com).

It's important to remember that each person's body is different. It might be wise to consult a dietician about specific nutritional needs. This can be done in person at a local weight loss center or through an online membership with a weight management website. Some familiar ones: Weight Watchers, SparkPeople, eDiets, and NutriSystem.

Next, you should **know your food triggers**. We all have them. Certain foods you love make you go crazy if you can't have it. As a matter of fact, I can think of one off the top of my head right now.



I loooooove macadamia nuts coated in toffee, covered with chocolate and topped off with a little powdered sugar (see the picture to the left). Oh, those are soooo good! Just thinking about them makes me want to get up and run to the store just to get a pack. Seriously, ask my daughter, she'll tell you. Any time we go to a store that sells these she tries to block me from buying them. I know, not good. During the holidays, there seem to be more food triggers around than any other time.

In addition, stress can make those foods seem all the more enticing. How does knowing your food triggers help? Let's say that chocolate brings on the cravings. What you want to do is prepare mentally to meet with this food trigger at parties and other places that you visit during the holidays. One way to combat the effects of a food trigger is to control your encounters with it. When you are the party host or dinner cooker, limit chocolate in the house, or prepare chocolate desserts using lower fat ingredients for fewer calories.

Eating right doesn't begin around the holidays but earlier in the year. It takes time to develop the healthy eating habits. And, with the Thanksgiving and Christmas at the end of the year, we need all of the practice we can get.

## **Get Moving**

What is it about exercise that we don't like? Maybe it's the sweating or an ache in our legs or arms while we workout. Whatever the problem could be, it doesn't have to be an issue for us.

### **FIRST: Find activities you like**

Exercise is only a boring monotonous burden when we do stuff we can't stand. It doesn't matter if it is for thirty minutes or an hour. You won't want to do that activity again if it's too hard or too mindlessly boring.



### **THEN: Start slow**

Getting acquainted with the mechanics of exercise will help one ease into a comfortable routine. Confidence will be gained as endurance increases. The main motivator for working out longer and trying tougher workouts will be the desire to feel even more confident. Plus, if you start too hard too fast, you'll HURT! Then you won't want to go out and do it again because you're too sore too busy trying to recover from your first outing.

### **FINALLY: Keep it up during the holidays!**

Don't stop moving during the holidays. A busy social calendar may not permit you to keep up with a regular routine, but it is important to do as much as possible. Squeeze in little things when you have the time. The effects of exercise are cumulative.

Maybe the cakes are baking in the oven for an hour. You can't go to the gym but you can stay in the neighborhood. Take a ride on the bike around the block or a walk with a friend or family member.



When no one else is around, go it alone. Music supplied by an iPod or a Walkman will distract you from the actual activity of exercise. What was to be a twenty minute walk could turn into a forty-five minute walk quite easily with music to listen to.



If it's too cold outside, stay inside, turn up the music and dance to 4 or 5 upbeat songs in a row while you're waiting for those cakes to bake! It's so much more fun and less cold and it still counts as exercise. 😊

Again, just like food, the more that you know about what you are doing, the easier it is to pick and choose activities that will help you to feel better, get in shape, and manage a weight loss. Read about cardiovascular activities and strength training. Each of us needs a combination of both to rev up the metabolism.

## AS THE HOLIDAYS APPROACH

### The Game Plan

If the object is to fight back against the holiday bulge, you must have a plan in place *before* the holiday comes. Thanksgiving and Christmas come faster than you think. One moment it will be the beginning of summer and the next we'll be celebrating Labor Day and it all just keeps rolling downhill from there.

Your strategy doesn't have to be a long drawn out list that accounts for every situation. Instead, a guideline of tips that can be translated easily into any situation will give you the power you need over your weight loss or gain.

Move on to the next page for some strategic ideas.

### **1. Substitute high fat and high calorie ingredients in food dishes**

When you cook, prepare meals using healthier items. For instance, a third or even a half of the fat used in cakes can be swapped for applesauce. The cake will still retain flavor and moistness. Don't forget to adjust for cooking time.

### **2. Plan each meal**

With a family around for the holidays, this is something that needs to be done anyway. Planning meals helps with grocery lists for the store instead of going in hungry and buying everything in sight. At lunch, make a bowl of salad. Eating a salad fills up the stomach to a point that the portion size of the main meal remains small.



### **3. Drink plenty of water**

This is probably even more important than you realize. Drinking the proper amount of water helps you lose weight. Water flushes out the impurities in your system. Drinking water before a meal can fill you up so you eat less. If you're one of those people who don't care for water, adding lemon, lime, or orange can perk up the flavor to make drinking water more bearable.

### **4. Avoid grazing**

Grazing is a huge problem at holiday time. You go to parties and pick up finger foods while you talk and mingle. At home, you do it while watching a football game or great holiday movie. To avoid grazing, fill snack size Ziploc bags with your favorites and keep them handy. During the movie, grab a bag or two. When they are gone, snack time is over.

## **5. Eat before attending a party**

Often you visit these places hungry thinking we will be okay. In fact, most times you probably skip meals so you can “pig out” at the party. This is a no-no and a disaster waiting to happen. Letting yourself have free rein with fatty trigger foods always ends badly. As long as they are around, you will attempt to eat it all, especially if you chose to forego meals earlier in the day to save space in your stomach for these party foods.

## **6. Watch portion size**

This is the objective of points 1-5. Smaller portions on smaller plates in combination with other tips will control how much you eat in any one sitting.

## **Enlist the Aid of Others**

Family members can join in on the weight game. We all have a tendency to overeat, young and old. Your family members can use some control as well.

When preparing for a movie night with family, pop some popcorn or get a few bags of chips. They can be regular or fat free chips. The point is not to eat more than the serving size.



Let the kids count out one or two servings and pour it into bags. Whenever you sit down, stock the party bowl on the table with an assortment of snack-filled bags. In case of mindless eating, you won't get more than you need.

Many families don't have time to unwind with each other. When everyone gets home, it is a mad dash to eat dinner, get homework done, and get to bed. Talking is not a high priority, unfortunately.



Change all that with an after dinner walk. If we have time to watch television for two hours, we have time to take a walk with our family. This little outing serves two purposes. One, we are getting the exercise we probably missed during the day, and two, we get to catch up with each other.

This ritual can be continued during the holidays. Drag everyone along for the walk. Family members you haven't seen for a while can walk and catch up on life. When you're talking and laughing, you won't even realize that you're getting a workout. With family, you probably won't mind it either.

## **DURING THE HOLIDAYS**

### **Aim for Weight Maintenance**

The time has come. The holidays are upon us. You have prepared yourself by reading books, consulting friends and experts, along with planning a holiday strategy to keep yourself from gaining too much weight if any.

It is time to put everything into practice with the pressure of cooking, baking, shopping, and hosting family and friends. The purpose of the holidays is to enjoy yourself and your family and friends! You *CAN* accomplish this without overeating or popping the buttons off your pants.

## **Remember to indulge in moderation, but go ahead and indulge**

One of the biggest deterrents to losing weight and keeping it off is the perception that you have to do one thing and not another. All food can be eaten as long as you choose to lower the amount that you eat at any one sitting.



### **Bring a Healthy Dish of Your Own**

When attending a party, bring a healthy dish to complement the rest of the party munchies. You now have a dish to fall back on if you see that you're eating too much of the other stuff. The ingredients of this dish are known to you so there is no problem with indulging.

## **Identify and Use a Measuring Tool**

In an effort to curb the weight gain, use a measuring tool. It can be the scale in the bathroom or a favorite outfit you want to wear to a holiday party. This tool will help gauge if things are being overdone or right where they need to be. Don't obsess over a couple of pounds. People typically gain at least ten or more around the holidays.



## **Choose to Eat IN**

Avoid eating out unless it is at a planned function. Eating in restaurants costs money and the portion sizes are much larger than needed. That brings mindless eating into play again. A plate of pasta that could feed at least two people will satisfy only one when conversations are going on. Before you know it, the entire bowl is empty.

### **Participate in Family Fun**

A house full of family members is bound to get up a game of touch football, kickball, or something else interesting. If you have a gaming system like the Wii, people will gather to play. Competition is a great way to get exercise during the holidays.

### **Get Out**

Forget the television and get some fresh air. These short bursts of energy are burning calories and keeping the metabolism working at an optimal rate. So, put the decorating and baking aside for a few hours and get involved.



### **Make the Most of Shopping**

Thankfully, shopping burns plenty of calories. During the holidays many of us are running from store to store as if our hair was on fire trying to find last minute gifts, decorations, and food items. Walking from aisle to aisle at lightning speed works the calves, quadriceps, and the heart.

### **Clean to Burn**

What about the cleaning? Guests make a mess. It is inevitable. Part of the time inside will be spent cleaning and straightening the house. Clothes need to be washed, carpets vacuumed, and kitchen and bathrooms scrubbed.

Enlist some help to get it all done, but your participation will burn calories. A half hour of housework can burn a couple hundred calories. It's worth a little elbow grease.

Don't neglect the outside. By thanksgiving there should be a ton of leaves on the ground ready to be raked. Trees and shrubs will need fertilizing and the garden may need weeding in preparation for the winter chill.

## Party Savvy

Parties are fun during the holidays. Kids are out of school and plenty of people are on vacation. With no school or work to think about, the atmosphere is a relaxed one. Sometimes it is so relaxed we don't think about what we are eating.



### Learn to trick yourself

Yep, I said to trick yourself. If you are a social butterfly, work the room at a party. Make the prime objective to hobnob and meet others, not to spend the evening at the buffet table.

When it is time for the buffet table, grab a plate and create one layer of food. Avoid piling one thing on another or thinking about seconds. What can't fit on the plate the first go round waits for some other time. This also gets us to limit how much of one thing we put on our plate.

### Dress thin

There are tricks to use to give a slimmer appearance to your frame. Dark outfits or dark stockings under a beautiful dress give the appearance of slimmer legs. Who would want to ruin that great profile by overeating? Besides, a crab puff on a black dress is not cute.

## Dinner Decisions

The time for Thanksgiving or Christmas dinner has arrived. A table full of favorite eats is spread out before us. The tendency is to pile the plate high with as much as we can get before it's all gone. In large families it could very well be gone after the first go round.



You have a decision to make. Will you pile it high or keep it low key? Ways to keep it low key involve more tricks. This is a time is when playing tricks is okay. Fooling yourself means less fat on the hips.

Make a toast to the season. Use a glass of water and drink the entire glass. The water has filled your hunger partially.



Eat a salad before the turkey and dressing. In fact, chop up pieces of ham and pieces of turkey and put it on a bed of lettuce. Add some salad fixings and dig right in. Once the salad is through, use a small plate to get some dressing and gravy, and whatever else looks tasty. Don't put much on the plate because there won't be much room left in your stomach.

For dessert, slice the cakes, pies, breads, and other goodies into portions before serving them. Anyone can create their own sampler plate of dessert using healthy appropriate portions of each dessert. Don't feel bad if you don't eat every bite. Tasting each one on your tongue may be enough to feed the craving.

## CONCLUSION

Food is all around us. It brings life to our gatherings especially around the holidays. Certain smells conjure up visions of holidays past and the good memories we created. Let that tradition continue without adding weight to the body.



Good food and family go hand in hand. Everyone involved can have a healthier time with a few tricks and tips. The primary reasons to gather is to enjoy the company so don't lose that when trying to stay slim and trim.

Don't neglect the resources around you. Other family members can join in to stay slim and trim while eating a variety or special foods. Families stick together through thick and slim. Here, we want slim and trim.

It is not necessary to do away with all of the fat to manage weight. Fat tastes good. That's why we like it, especially the latter part of the year.

So instead of depriving yourself of fat and holiday indulgences completely, just keep the tips in this e-book in mind and look forward to a healthy holiday season with your family!

So from my family to yours...

Wishing you a very happy (*and healthy*) holiday season!



Stacie Mahoe

[www.TrimMom.com](http://www.TrimMom.com)

*P.S. - If you need help with staying on track and achieving your weight loss goals and want to:*

- Track your foods and get feedback on your calories, carbs, fat, protein, and nutrition
- Plan your weight loss and monitor your progress
- Keep your diet on a budget
- Track and analyze your activities, metabolism, weight, moods, measurements, and more!

Try Fit Day's smarter weight loss system at <http://tinyurl.com/5mdqpz>