

# Holiday Tips Summary



Eating well, being active, and getting enough sleep are healthy living strategies you should practice. When the pressures of the season add up, it is even more important to look after yourself.

## Stay healthy, happy, and fit over the holidays with these simple tips.

### Exercise over the Holidays

- ✓ **Combine exercise and family commitments:** want to enjoy the holiday lights? Instead of driving, walk! Sledding, cross-country skiing, and skating are other inexpensive (and fun!) options
- ✓ **Create a home workout routine:** many exercises (e.g., push-ups, lunges, squats) don't require any equipment.
- ✓ **Be flexible:** do not blow off your workout when the days get busy. Try a brisk walk at lunch.
- ✓ **Commit to exercise:** organize tomorrow, today! Schedule exercise as though it is an important appointment. Tell others about your commitment.
- ✓ **Enjoy the outdoors:** shoveling snow is a great form of exercise. While outdoors take time to clear your head and enjoy the scenery.
- ✓ **Make an early New Year resolution:** write your goals down and post where you will see them often.
- ✓ **Allow for 'me' time:** set aside 30 min. - 1 hr. a day to exercise. Go to the gym by yourself if you are feeling overwhelmed. Enjoy "me" time during the often chaotic holidays.
- ✓ **Record your physical activity:** monitor your daily activities by keeping an "exercise diary." Are you doing enough? Is it time to reward yourself? Keeping a log is especially important when trying to balance a busy schedule.



### Eating Healthy Over the Holidays

- ✓ **Plan your eating:** mark your holiday parties on a calendar and create a personal eating guideline for each event. Plan to eat lean the days before and after.
- ✓ **Set a calorie curfew:** set an eating curfew and don't eat after it. A great curfew time is 8 p.m.
- ✓ **Eat a light snack before leaving for a party:** try raw veggies, fruit, yogurt, or low-fat cheese. You will be less tempted to over-indulge.



- ✓ **Begin with the end in mind:** start your day off with a metabolism-boosting protein shake or eggs.
- ✓ **Don't hover around the buffet table:** choose 3 – 4 items then step away.
- ✓ **Keep liquid calories in check:** make friends with water. An 8 oz. glass of water before a meal will help to reduce hunger.
- ✓ **Choose low-calorie festive foods:** try lean deli meats, chicken kebabs, salsa, steamed asparagus, grilled shrimp or salmon, or brussels sprouts.
- ✓ **Keep your portions small:** put food on a small plate, or even better, a napkin. You will eat less and savor more.
- ✓ **Take the focus off of food:** turn cookie baking time into non-edible projects (e.g., making a wreath)
- ✓ **Survey the party buffet before filling your plate:** choose your favorites and skip your least favorites.
- ✓ **Do not skip meals**

## Give Yourself the Gift of Sleep

The quality of your sleep directly affects the quality of your waking hours, including mental sharpness, productivity, emotional balance, creativity, and body weight.

- ✓ **Connect with friends and family:** de-stress and prepare for a good night's sleep.
- ✓ **Take a laughter break:** watch a holiday comedy or read a funny book. Humour is a great way to ease stress and prepare for rest.
- ✓ **Fit in a seasonal siesta:** a short (1 hr. or less) midday nap may reduce your sleep debt, boost productivity, and refresh your day.
- ✓ **Stick to your regular routine:** set aside 1 hr. each night to relax and prepare for sleep. Customary pre-sleep rituals (e.g., warm bath, reading) help ensure you get a good sleep.
- ✓ **Avoid caffeinated beverages 4-6 hours before bedtime:** caffeine is a stimulant that can inhibit your sleeping pattern.
- ✓ **Avoid a heavy meal before bedtime:** have your last meal of the day at least 2-3 hours before sleep. This will limit digestive upset.
- ✓ **Make your sleeping area conducive to healthy rest:** your sleeping area should be quiet, dark, comfortable, and cool. A TV or computer may be a distraction. Leave your stress and worries of the day in another room.



**Resources:** [www.webmd.com](http://www.webmd.com), [www.healthcentral.com](http://www.healthcentral.com), [www.besthealthmag.com](http://www.besthealthmag.com), [www.sleepfoundation.org](http://www.sleepfoundation.org), [www.epicurious.com](http://www.epicurious.com), [www.canadianliving.com](http://www.canadianliving.com)