

Six Weeks to a **Happy & Healthy** Holiday Season!

Week Six – Taking Care of Ourselves

With so many things on our calendars – parties, luncheons, shopping, wrapping & cooking – it is no wonder that many of us feel rundown or, even worse, find ourselves sick during or just following the holidays.

This year, take the time to put your own health as a top priority and make time in your schedule for fitness and rejuvenation!

You may feel like there isn't any time to get exercise during the hectic holiday season – it certainly can feel that way but that's all the more reason to **MAKE** the time to get exercise. All it takes is 20-30 minutes a day to stay healthy over the holidays.



Worrying about those extra calories from an upcoming party? A vigorous workout the day of or following a holiday overindulgence can keep you on track and help you avoid the holiday weight gain.



Ice skating is another great way to get outside and enjoy the weather while being active – bring the whole family and create memories to cherish for a lifetime!

Yes, it may be cold out but it's nothing warm clothing can't beat. A great way to combat holiday stress is to bundle up and head out for a hike through the neighbourhood and enjoy the beautiful winter scenery. When you get home, warm up with a nice cup of herbal or green tea!



And they all settled in for a long winter's nap...



Getting enough sleep helps you keep your exercise routine on track and wards off weight gain, both matters that tend to be even more of an issue at this time of the year. Here are some great tips on how to get enough sleep during one of the most hectic times of the year:

- Spend time with your friends and children. Celebrating and connecting is actually an effective way to de-stress which prepares you for a good night's rest.
- Watch a holiday comedy. Researchers at the University of California at Irvine conducted a study with 16 people, whom they asked to watch a funny video. Researchers found the participants stress hormone levels dropped significantly watching the comedy and levels of the anti-stress growth hormone rose 87%. Some holiday options: *Elf*, *A Christmas Story* & *Scrooged*.
- If you need a nap, **take one!** Try and limit yourself to 20 minutes to get optimal benefits and not feel too groggy when you get up.
- Your holiday fitness plan is also going to help your sleep! Studies from the University of Arizona have shown that those who walked even short distances (just six blocks) at a normal pace during the day found their sleep significantly improved.

Source: www.huffingtonpost.ca, www.besthealthmag.ca,