

Mind Body Connection by Andrea Metcalf

HOLIDAY PARTY SURVIVAL GUIDE

The average weight gain through the holiday season is eight pounds – but you don't have to skip the turkey and all the trimmings to keep your weight in place. Survive this holiday party season without feeling like an overstuffed bird and bone up on your weight management skills.

Here are my favorite tips to help avoid holiday gain and the subsequent pain of having to lose excess party weight in the New Year.

1) AVOID PARTYING ON AN EMPTY BELLY

Eat a healthy snack before you leave the house; it will help diffuse that hunger crazed urge to binge that suddenly seems to come over us at gatherings. We are less apt to overeat if we feel full.

2) FOCUS ON FRESH BREATH

Chew a piece of gum or have a small breath mint before you walk into a party. A burst of fresh breath deters the urge to immediately start attacking the appetizers. This tip also works well when cooking or baking.

3) LOITER ELSEWHERE

Hanging out at the food trough is a sure fire way to repeatedly fill your plate. Position yourself at a party so

that you have to make a conscious effort to walk across the room to reach the bar or buffet. Those extra steps will also burn a few more calories and every little bit DOES help.

4) PICK PROTEIN OVER SUGAR

While you might be tempted to go for the cookies, pick protein (meats and beans) instead. Opting for protein foods will void the empty calories of high sugar foods and help balance out your hormonal response with the beverages you may also be consuming.

5) FILL UP & FLUSH OUT WITH FIBER

Foods high in fiber, like vegetables, are the best carbohydrates to consume on the party circuit. High fiber foods are low in calories, high in nutrients and promote that 'full feeling'. They also keep you regular; which helps decrease the amount of food converted to fat and stored indefinitely in your body.

6) EAT SLOWLY AND CHEW, CHEW, CHEW

We're prone to eat and talk without much thought to the amount of gobbling we're doing at the time. "Mindless" eating can be easily

curbed when we eat slowly and chew our food into small bits. Remember: it takes approximately 20 minutes of food consumption before signals are sent to the brain that we are full and should stop eating.

7) HYDRATE AND ALTERNATE

If you are dehydrated, you'll be more likely to be hungry, crave sugar and over drink. Alternate a glass of water with any holiday beverage and drinks lots of water throughout the day. Water flushes out toxins and also helps sustain a full feeling. Make water highly accessible around you; keeping a bottle of water in tow is a great reminder to drink.

8) MONKEY SEE, MONKEY DON'T!

Don't fall into the habit of continued eating and drinking because others around you are doing so. What did our parents always say? "Just because (so 'n so) does it, doesn't mean you have to!"

9) FIRE UP ON FITNESS

Daily exercise is the key and common factor for permanent weight loss in countless studies. Try to get at least 15 minutes of continuous aerobic exercise in daily – that's SEVEN days a week.



10) GO TO BED EARLY

On the days when you don't have a gathering to go to, get to bed early! Sleep deprivation makes you hungry, cranky and changes the way our hormones allow the body to break down fat. Studies have shown that a lack of sleep can promote weight gain and decrease the body's ability to lose weight even when eating right and exercising. A minimum of eight hours' sleep is crucial to rejuvenate the mind, body and spirit.

Andrea is a member of the NBC5 Fitness Team and shares her expertise weekly on "Wednesday Workouts" in the morning and has been called upon frequently as a contributing expert on CLTV, WGN, and CNN Headline Newsmakers. Her studio, mbc Fitness and nutrition counseling center, mbc Well Centered, are located in Westmont. Contact her by phone at (630) 493-3000 or online at: www.mbc-fitness.com.

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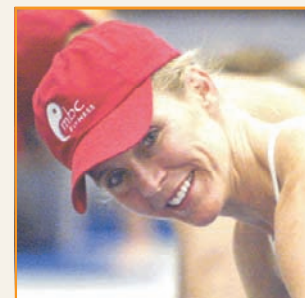
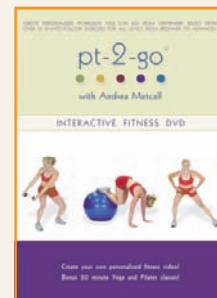
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