

Surviving the Festive Season

Festive season is in full swing, which is exciting, but can also be a little dangerous for our health and fitness goals. Trying to maintain a healthy and balanced diet with all the Christmas parties, BBQ's and other get together's that are happening can sometimes be difficult. The best way to approach the festive season is to think "maintenance" phase. You have worked hard all year, now it is time to focus on maintaining those results, and then starting again with new goals in the new year. We just want to avoid going backwards. Going overboard on the food and booze, and forgetting to maintain at least some form of exercise will take us backwards. Helping us maintain our hard earned results comes down to planning ahead. Think of the social situation you will be in and have these tips in mind.

- Spark up a conversation. The more you talk, the less you will be inclined to eat.
- Move away from the nibbles or buffet table, don't sit or stand next to it.
- Don't arrive hungry. Have a small healthy meal before you go to avoid grazing on classic party type foods (usually not the healthiest).
- Make a plan to stay away from the 'bad' foods (lollies, chocolates, pastries, deep fried foods), or if you have the discipline, set yourself an allowance – 'I will have one piece of cake and that's it'.
- Go for the healthier options. Snack on things like crackers and dip, fruit platters, and avoid the sausage rolls and brie. If out for dinner, don't order an entrée, or order a soup (not cream based), as this will help you feel fuller sooner. Order a protein and vegetable dish for a main and avoid the heavy based carb meals, especially if mixed in a creamy sauce. If dessert is on the cards, share with someone.
- Put your knife and fork down between each bite. Enjoy what you are eating by eating slowly. This will allow your brain to tell your body that you are full without overeating. Remember there is a 20 minute lag time for fullness.
- Try to limit alcohol and have a glass of water between each alcoholic beverage.
- Keep indulgent days to a minimum, so that when Christmas day and new years eve roll around, you can let go a little and enjoy them. But remember 4 days of indulgent eating can take its toll so try to save it for special occasions.

Just because you are trying to eat healthy doesn't mean you need to avoid social gatherings, or even have a complete blow out. Plan ahead and stay in control of your eating as much as possible. This will give you the best chance of staying on track with your goals.

