

Maintaining Fitness Over the Holidays

You have been working hard to build your fitness, get into a good exercise routine and you feel like you are seeing some great improvements, and then... holidays hit. There is a break in that exercise routine. Lives get a bit busier with family and festivities. You start to worry about your hard earned fitness, slowly escaping you and think to yourself "I am going to have to start all over again after the holiday break". Well the good news is you can maintain some of those fitness improvements with just a few workouts over the break. It does not mean you need to stick to your strict exercise schedule of 5:30 am starts and hour workouts each session. But if you plan ahead, get yourself prepared, and use the opportunities you are given to keep moving, you can maintain most of those fitness improvements, and will find you do not have to start again after the break.

Start by planning ahead. Look at your schedule and try to plan the days you can squeeze in a 20-30 minute workout. Pencil them in. Even if they have to move to a different day because something else comes up, that is fine, but pencil them in so they are at least on your mind. Look for things you can do in your area, whether you are going away or staying local. Hikes, fun runs, bike riding, swimming, anything that gets you moving, see what the area has to offer.

Get yourself prepared. If you are going away, pack yourself some workout clothes and of course, your runners. Pack a drink bottle, and an exercise mat if it fits. If you have the stuff in front of you, you are more likely to use it. Going away or staying at home, dust off those resistance bands and skipping ropes. These are fantastic items to take with you on holidays!!! And now find your workouts and have them on your phone or on your computer ready to go. I suggest aiming for 1 high intensity workout, aimed at cardio fitness, as well as 1 strength based workout, aimed at maintaining muscle tone. They only need to be 20-30 minutes in length (longer if you have it), but holidays are for enjoying so short intense workouts are best during this time. And then plan a few lower intensity workouts like walking, swimming, kayaking, bike riding. Anything that just keeps you moving.

Use any opportunity to move. Walk to the beach rather than driving. Ride to the shops to grab bread rather than driving. Use stairs rather than lifts. Get outside for some gardening or some active play with the kids. Use the extra time to walk the dog further or more often. What ever it may be, just use every opportunity to stay active.

Just remember that taking a break is ok and is actually a good thing. It allows your body some down time to recoup. And Holidays are meant to be spent with family and friends, enjoying the time off and doing what you love. But do not let this time set you back too far. Add a few workouts into your plans and you will be able to enjoy the holidays, stay active, and get back into it much easier once the break is over.

Plan ahead, get prepared, and use every opportunity to stay active. Happy Holidays!