

HOLIDAY WEIGHT LOSS



TIPS FOR A TRIMMER YOU!

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[Embrace Our Heritage](#)

[frank@Embrace Our Heritage.org](mailto:frank@EmbraceOurHeritage.org)

The Holiday Season is one in which we all indulge ourselves in over-abundance; especially when it comes to food. Food has become a central part of our get-togethers and parties around the holidays, so it is important that we remember to make smart food choices. And this is something that is almost always easier said than done when you see some of the decadent food choices made available, made with love, by your friends and family.

In most cases, the majority of the party-going people won't be concerned with watching their weight, so they are less inclined to bring healthier versions of their best recipes. Then it becomes our own burden to stick with our diets or to watch what we eat as the food choices are always so tempting!

The following 15 holiday eating tips are here to help you when going to holiday parties to better watch your weight by giving you some great ideas.

1. Stop Eating When You Feel Full. This is something most people won't, or don't, do. Especially those that are in the 'clean plate' club and don't like to leave extra or left over food on their plates. Honestly, there is absolutely no shame in leaving that extra portion of food on your plate. When your tummy feels full, just push yourself away from the table and say "No More for Me Thanks!"

2. Take A Few Extra or Longer Walks. Walking is a terrific form of exercise, and can be a great cardiovascular workout in colder temperatures; especially when there is a nice layer of snow on the ground. Next time you go to let your dog out to do their bathroom 'business', why not slip on your coat and shoes, grab their leash and take them for a walk around the block, or down a few blocks. Fido will love you for it and you will be making yourself a healthier 'you' by doing it as well.

3. Don't Count Calories Incessantly. This is unnecessary and will drive your loved ones crazy and yourself too. Let's face it; there are enough stressors around the Holidays to worry about. Gaining an extra few pounds should be the least of your troubles! The best thing you can do if you are already dieting is to watch not what you eat, but how much of it you are eating instead of trying to keep track of your caloric intake. Unless of course you are on a strict

diet and need to avoid things that contain higher carbohydrates, sugars, etc. In this case, you would obviously want to avoid eating things like potatoes, breads, cookies, candies, cakes, etc.

4. Use Reduced Fat, Sugar Substitutes, or Fat Free

Ingredients in Your Recipes. Lots of people complain that fat-free or reduced fat ingredients change the flavor of their favorite recipes, and not in a good way. But, in all reality, there is barely a hint of difference in flavor. In fact, if one did not have the knowledge that normal ingredients such as sour cream had been replaced with a fat-free or reduced fat substitute, you would never hear a peep about the taste. When replacing sugar such as pure cane sugar with a substitute such as Splenda, Equal, or the like, you may notice a taste difference. So, in this case, if you have picky family members, simply make two versions of the same dessert or snacks and let your family opt for their own choice.

5. Eat One Big Meal Instead Of Continuous Snacking Or Smaller Meals.

Opinions will vary on this one, but whether you're eating a bigger meal once, or several smaller meals throughout the day, the amount of food you are taking in is just about the same at any rate. The difference in eating a big meal once is that you will be completely full, or have the full 'feeling' so you won't be hungry as much. And DO NOT think you can have your 3 square meals a day and then add a couple of more to the mix. That will most definitely pack on the unwanted pounds. Remember to always eat in moderation and keep in mind the full feeling. When you are getting full, STOP EATING!

6. Know Your Eating Boundaries And Don't Cross Them. This tip is especially important if you are already dieting or trying to lose weight. You know better than Aunt Betty what you can eat. Even though her home-made pound cake might taste wonderful, you may want to not opt for seconds if you are on a strict diet. Many people like to splurge around the holiday season, but it's all a matter of will power really. If you just can't help yourself and must have some of Uncle Fred's ambrosia salad, then take a smaller than normal portion of it.

7. Go For The Healthy Food Choices. Almost every family unit has at least one 'health nut' within its midst. If there are healthy food choices available, then eat more of the plain fruits and vegetables instead of the pies cakes and cookies in the holiday 'spread'. Remember too that extra dips can help pack on

the pounds. Don't be afraid to ask what the dips are made from so you can make a more informed judgment on whether or not you can enjoy them. Also, you can always bring healthier food dips for fruits and veggies with you such as yogurt or reduced calorie veggie dips that are sold at most major grocery stores before the big get-together.

8. Eat In Moderation With Smaller Portions. As discussed earlier, take smaller portions of all those calorie packed goodies. This way, you can still partake of all the wonderful eats without packing on all the extra pounds that go along with all those goodies. And remember too to balance out the bad foods, or those that are packed with sugars and carbohydrates, with good foods such as plain fruits and vegetables.

9. Drink In Moderation. No, this is not an advertisement for drinking and driving, even though you should always have a designated driver if you plan on drinking more than the legal limit of course, or anything at all due to cold, icy, roads. Rather, many holiday drinks are packed with extra sugars, so watch how much of the good old egg nog you drink. This goes for either alcoholic or non-alcoholic beverages. Water is always a great choice, or non-sweetened tea or coffee. There too, is also diet soda pop if you are a soda drinker.

10. Substitute Whole Grains In Lieu of Higher Carbohydrate Filled Grains. Try to steer clear of white breads, sugary cakes, potatoes, cookies, or anything else that you believe to have a high carbohydrate count. These can put a lot of weight on you quickly and is why many diets try to steer clear of these carb laden monoliths. Go for the whole wheat, multi-grain, sugar substitute holiday food choices. Sure, it's not the same as loading up on all the 'bad-for-you' foods, but you'll be glad you did when January rolls around.

11. No Eating After 7p.m. This can be extremely difficult to do; especially when most holiday get together happen after 7 o'clock! If this is the case, then you should eat before you go to the holiday bash. Most foods are not properly burned off if eaten after 7 o'clock p.m. So, it's best if you eat long before this time rolls around. However, you can eat something healthy such as fruits or vegetables minus the fatty dips if you really need to snack on something.

12. Drink More Liquids Than Eating. Drinking more liquids will fool your body into believing it is full. Therefore, you can drink lots of water, unsweetened tea or coffee, diet sodas, low calorie fruit smoothies or soft drinks (non-carbonated), etc. without feeling the guilt of over eating. Stay away from higher sweetened drinks as this will defeat the purpose of watching your weight.

13. Eat Something Before You Go Grocery Shopping. Actually, you should eat something before you do any out of the house, or in house for that matter, activity that will burn calories. But, the main reason for going grocery shopping on a full stomach is that you will be less inclined to purchase all those fattening junk foods because you are not hungry so you aren't tempted by those types of food choices. You will be able to stay on track and only purchase those things you need from the grocery store instead of packing your cart with weight packing foods!

14. Plan an Out-Door Activity. Depending on the region you live it, whether the weather is warmer or colder, plan on doing something outdoors. This can be something you do by yourself, with family, or friends that doesn't involve any eating. Things like cutting down your own Christmas Tree, shopping for gifts, either last minute or not, walking through the park (you may want to do this with someone or a small group for safety reasons), going sledding, skiing, skating, playing some backyard football, collecting pine cones and creating some simple bird feeders with bird seed and peanut butter, and any other activities you can think up. Try to do one thing each week to replace a day of exercise or work out that you would normally do to keep things interesting and everyone in the holiday spirit!

15. No Healthy Food Choices? Bring Some! Cutting up vegetables or fruits to create a holiday health tray can be a nice 'change of pace' for your friends or family. Why not try bringing some healthy holiday cheer at your next get together. Chances are someone else in your extended friends or family network are trying to watch their wastes too and would appreciate having a healthier-than-normal food choice. Even if that isn't the case, you are still saving yourself tons of work out time later once all those extra caloric fatty foods are attaching themselves to your waistline.

Of course there are always more things you can do to watch your weight year round. Try incorporating some of those things during the holidays as well since we all tend to eat a bit more and make less than savory choices to keep ourselves healthy, fit, and trim. Take the ideas in the tips above and fit them in to your lifestyle by changing them up a bit. Remember being healthy is a lifestyle in and of itself and should be practiced year round. It's especially important not to slack off around the holiday season when most of the unhealthy food choices are abundant.

I do hope the ideas listed above have helped you realize that you can watch your weight and still have a wonderful time at holiday gatherings without making a 'Santa's Helper' out of yourself :-).

Happy Holidays!