



Inspire the World to Fitness®

Contact:

Kelly Nakai
IDEA Health & Fitness Association
858.535.8979, ext. 212
knakai@ideafit.com

Tabitha Bailey
HetzelMeade Communications
805.241.2532
tabitha@hetzelmeade.com

Top 10 Healthy Eating and Survival Strategies for the Holidays

*Holiday stress, parties and celebration foods cause weight gain.
Use these strategies to stay on a healthy eating track and keep your weight steady this year.*

San Diego – December 14, 2009 – We overindulge in rich foods and sweets. We drink too much. We stress about making the holidays perfect for our loved ones and we neglect to take care of ourselves! This results in weight gain, stress hormone release and most often knocks us out of our balanced fitness and healthy eating grooves. IDEA Health & Fitness Association, the leading membership organization of health, wellness and fitness professionals worldwide with more than 23,000 members in over 80 countries, has put together its list of Top 10 Healthy Survival Strategies for the Holidays.

1. **Create and Stick to a Healthy Eating Plan:** To help maintain healthy eating habits, identify potential problem areas and anticipate situations that may present challenges. By recognizing and anticipating your primary weaknesses, you are more likely to stick with a plan.
2. **Allow yourself some slack and don't aim for perfection.** Choose to focus on two areas such as sticking to a firm workout schedule and avoiding the cheese tray (if that is a weakness).
3. **Eat at normal mealtimes.** While the holidays can be hectic, it is important to stay on your normal mealtime schedule. Don't try to "make up" for bad eating by skimping at breakfast or lunch, as this sets you up for poor energy, hunger and bad food choices at the next party (and the next day).
4. **Eat sensibly before any "splurges" or parties.** For example, if you are going to an evening festivity, eat a balanced, lighter lunch, such as a mixed green salad with grilled chicken and chopped apples. It is also helpful to try to eat a high-fiber snack, like a handful of colorful veggies, midafternoon to avoid going to the party starving.
5. **Practice mindfulness.** Before you heap any party food onto your plate, scan the offerings on the table. Consciously take one "virtual" trip through the buffet to see what is being served. This will help you make better choices.
6. **Savor each party experience! Eat slowly.** "Be in the moment" with both the food you eat and the conversations you have with other guests; eating more slowly will help you be more aware of when you are satisfied and feeling full.
7. **Create a physical buffer zone between you and food at parties.** Whether it's a couch, an end table or a group of people, create a zone that is a safe distance from the buffet. This prevents you from being within arm's distance of those tempting dishes and discourages mindless munching.

8. Limit your alcohol intake. Aside from alcohol being an appetite stimulant and a diuretic (two things you don't need!), there are many empty calories in beer, wine and spirits! Do your body a favor and hydrate with still or sparkling water. Add a slice of citrus or other garnish to make your drink as festive as the occasion.
9. Set reasonable expectations to prevent holiday stress. Pace yourself. Organize your time, and prioritize the important activities. Be realistic about what you can and cannot do.
10. Make Time for You! 1. Relax: Take time out for simply "being." Meditate, listen to music or just relax without feeling guilty about not "doing." 2. Do something fun you wouldn't normally do, such as taking a class or getting a massage. 3. Connect with people. Spend time with the most important people in your life, especially those who offer you emotional support, caring and a good sense of humor!

To access more great tips on staying balanced and preventing weight gain during the holidays, go to the IDEA Library at <http://www.ideafit.com/fitness-library> or click straight through to the following resources:
<http://www.ideafit.com/fitness-library/healthy-holiday-eating>
<http://www.ideafit.com/fitness-library/beating-holiday-bulge>
<http://www.ideafit.com/fitness-library/enjoying-holiday-season>
<http://www.ideafit.com/fitness-library/happy-healthy-holidays>
<http://www.ideafit.com/fitness-library/leftover-turkey-soup-pasta>

About IDEA Health & Fitness Association

IDEA Health & Fitness Association is the world's leading membership organization of fitness and wellness professionals with more than 23,000 members in over 80 countries. Since 1982, IDEA has provided personal trainers, group exercise instructors, fitness program directors, mind-body teachers, health club owners and fitness center managers with pertinent information, health and fitness educational opportunities, career development programs and industry leadership while helping them enhance the quality of life worldwide through safe, effective lifestyle and fitness programs. IDEA members interact with consumers more than 25 million times a year in the fitness marketplace. For more information on IDEA fitness and wellness conferences, publications, professional fitness education and products, member services and other activities, visit [IDEA Health & Fitness Association](http://www.ideafit.com).

