

Health Awareness

A County Health Pool Publication



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Healthy Holiday Fitness Program

The holiday season can be enough to derail even the most dedicated exerciser. Here are some tips to help you stay fit through the New Year.

The first step, says one lifestyle coach, is acknowledging the holidays probably will affect your exercise program to some extent. Then you can make adjustments that will help you stay fit during the season. For example, if you usually take exercise classes only offered at a certain time, skip the classes and take a hike or a swim at an indoor pool instead.

Take an honest look at your schedule, and instead of trying to squeeze exercise into your schedule, take other things out. The goal is not to do more (as we all have a



tendency to do this time of year), but to do less, but do it all well.

It's also important to keep fitness a priority in your schedule. Whether or not you already have well-established exercise habits, make sure you actually schedule time into your day for your exercise. Indeed, maintaining a workout schedule is even more important this time of year because most of us tend to eat more than usual.

Be Flexible and Mix It Up

Here are some more expert tips for staying fit during the time-crunched, temptation-packed holiday season:

- Be flexible when your days get busy. Instead of simply blowing off your 5 p.m. trip to the gym in favor of an office party at the same time, wake up an hour early and walk or jog be-

fore work. Or fit a brisk walk into your lunch hour.

- Mix up your routine to avoid boredom. If you usually run four days a week, try running once, swimming once, and lifting weights twice.
- To save time, try combining exercising and family commitments. For example, hauling the kids up a hill a few times can make a sledding trip as beneficial as a jog. Taking the family snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, or on a backpacking trip will provide exercise as well as quality time with loved ones.
- Book a long weekend getaway at a warm destination for January or February. This will motivate you to keep exercise a



(Over)

Healthy Holiday Fitness Program (Continued)

priority. When you're tempted to slack off, envision yourself looking good on the beach.

- Increase your time management skills over the holiday season. Organize your day the evening before. Prioritizing your tasks beforehand will help you find time to exercise. Each week, make it a priority to fit in three exercise sessions.
- Walking is an exercise that can go anywhere, from the woods to the mall.

5 Cold-Weather Workout Tips

If cold weather is derailing your fitness activities, here are some tips for winter weather workouts:

1. **Lace up your skates.** During the winter it's often too cold, too dark, or too slippery to walk or run outside. To get in a great workout, try ice skating.
2. **Try thermal underwear.** If you really need to be outside in frigid weather, add a layer of thermal underwear, which will keep you both warm and dry by wicking sweat away from your body.

3. **Don't push it.** On days when the air feels too cold to even breathe in, heed your body's signals and stay indoors. Cold air can trigger exercise-induced asthma (EIA). Symptoms include wheezing, chest tightness, coughing, chest pain, and shortness of breath.

4. **Try a new home routine.** Bodyweight routines are exercises that need no equipment and can be done in your own home. There are many types of bodyweight routines, such as yoga, Pilates, and aerobics. Pop in a fitness DVD or download a workout on your tablet to get you going.

5. **Set up your own gym.** Now is the time to think about getting a treadmill, elliptical machine, or stationary bike. Having your own equipment and knowing how to use it will keep you motivated and help you stay on track.

When all is said and done, it's important to be realistic. Give yourself a little slack during the holidays, if you have a rigid attitude toward your diet and exercise, you

may end up just giving up because you've set the standard too high.

So allow yourself some "cheat" days. In reality, what matters is the overall total calories you consume and the overall total you expend through physical activity over the entire holiday period. One or two splurges aren't going to derail your efforts.

You're busy, you're stressed, it's chilly out ... so why not just take a break from your fitness program until the New Year?

Sure, you can always come up with an excuse not to exercise. But slacking off on your fitness program during the holidays will only leave you with more pounds -- and more stress -- come New Year's.

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Benefits Corner

Reminder:

As a reminder, you will only receive a new ID card for 2014 if you are making any changes to your current enrollment status or plan selection. All 2014 SBCs (Summary of Benefits and Coverage), Dental and Vision Summaries are located at www.ctsi.org