

# Holiday Fitness Survival Tips

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In the beginning of this year, I shared a humorous post from one of my clients. The post says, "Do you know what I got for Christmas? Fat. I got fat." While it is true that the average population's annual weight gain happens in the 6-week time period between Thanksgiving and New Year, we don't have to be part of this statistics. So, let's come up with a game plan we all can use to become the exception to the rule this year.

## Survival Tip #1 – Book Your Workouts Like You Do Holiday Parties

Your social calendar is likely to get extra busy over the holiday season and you check your calendar every time you get invited to yet another shin-ding so you don't double book yourself. How easy is it to then book over your regular workouts if you don't already have them on your calendar? Spend some time to plan out your workout days and times for the next few weeks and be sure to have a Plan B if you do decide to ditch a regular workout to go to a holiday party. Yes it may mean you have to get your butt out of bed early in the morning as opposed to your evening workouts but you will feel so good about yourself in the end so just do it!

## Survival Tip #2 – Take Your Workouts On The Road

If you have to travel over the holidays, do your research ahead of time. Find out what fitness offerings your hotel has or if you're staying with friends and family, look for local health clubs and studios and inquire about their holiday schedule. Find a class you like to take and invite others to come along. If you're going somewhere with nice weather, look for local parks and trails and pack your running or hiking gear with you. If all else fails, bring a workout DVD or pack a resistance tubing or TRX and ask your personal trainer to give you a workout you can do with these simple but effective tools.

## Survival Tip #3 – Don't Go To A Party Hungry

I'm sure many of you, myself included, have made

this mistake at least one time or another. Knowing that you're invited to a dinner party later that night, you decide to starve yourself all day to save the calories for later consumption. While this seems like a reasonably justifiable strategy, you're slowing down your metabolic engine and putting your body into starvation mode. The end result is that you may actually consume way more calories overall than you would have otherwise if you simply eat sensibly throughout the day and arrive at the party somewhat satisfied. Also, when your body is in starvation mode, it's likely to send every single calorie you consume into storage.

## Survival Tip #4 – Portion Control and Liquid Calories

Indulging in your favorite holiday treats is what makes holidays special. It is not a time to deprive yourself but remember the first few bites are what's most satisfying. So pretend you're at a fancy restaurant with small tasting portions and stop when you feel like you wish you could have just one more bite. Also, enjoying a couple libations while you socialize is perfectly acceptable. Do remember that each gram of alcohol is worth 7 calories, only 2 calories less than a gram of fat and it's nowhere near as filling. Besides, alcohol lowers your inhibition so you may end up munching on more calories than otherwise. Drinking a glass of water in between alcoholic drinks will help keep you hydrated and reduce overall consumption.

## Survival Tip #5 – Keep A Food Log

If you are serious about keeping your waistline in check over the holidays, keep logging your food so you're conscious of what you're putting into your body. It's so easy to add 500 or more calories per day simply by picking up a piece or two of holiday cookies and sweets at your company break room. With all the smart phone apps out there now, keeping track of your food intake has never been easier. Having to log it will make you think twice before reaching for treats and will save you many calories over the holiday season. Check out free apps like myfitnesspal, lose it, or livestrong.

## Survival Tip #6 – Stuff The Stocking With Workout Treats

Growing up, my family always used my favorite junk foods as stocking stuffers. Instead, why not put workout socks that we can never have enough of, iTunes gift cards so we can load up on some new heart pumping workout tunes or a nice water bottle to stay hydrated all day long?

While all these tips could be helpful, perhaps the most important thing is to perceive staying active over the holidays as a stress reliever rather than an extra thing we have to fit into our already busy schedules. Try it and you may find yourself not only surviving the holidays, but loving it instead!