



As holidays come around, whether it's Christmas, Thanksgiving, New Years, or even Valentine's, when you know there's some chance chocolate will be involved in your day, you may start to feel some anxiety about how you'll make it through with your diet intact.

The holidays do tend to be difficult because food is everywhere and it seems as though temptation is lurking around every corner. To add insult to injury, people give you more fattening food as gifts and you can't just turn it down.

So how do you get through the holidays with your body weight in place? If you know a few key tips, it's much easier than you may think.

1) Design An Effective Workout Program: Since you likely won't be spending quite as much time at the gym during the holidays, you want to make sure that every minute you are in the gym counts double time.

Consider doing full body workouts rather than just legs on one day and back on another. Also, instead of isolated movements, try compound movements. For example, instead of a bicep curl, do an underhand row. If you're already active, you can also add in some cardio intervals. Using the treadmill, elliptical, or even jump rope can get your cardio going. If you're not yet active, long walks will get you going.

2) Pre-Plan Which Meals You'll Indulge In: I know how it goes – you start off with good intentions, but somewhere between just one sip of eggnog and a slice of pecan pie, caution gets thrown to the wind and the next thing you know, it's January 2

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and you're looking down at the scale in horror. If you're serious about surviving the holidays, take the time to pre-plan which meals you will indulge in. Having a light, healthy snack and a large glass of water before you get to the holiday party makes gorging turn into nibbling and keeps you from packing on unwanted pounds.

The point is to have a plan.

3) Relax and Enjoy: Holiday guests, cooking large meals, the shopping... it all adds up to a certain level of unwelcome anxiety around the holidays. This tends to lead to binge eating (and drinking) to cure those holiday jitters. But that's not what the holidays are about. Let's try to remember that the holidays are about giving thanks for what we have - our family, friends, health, etc. – not about gifts or extravagance. Keeping that in mind will help us to stay calm, focused and happy and fend off excess pounds.

So keep these points in mind as you navigate through the holidays. As long as you are well-prepared and stay active, you will be able to keep the weight off, and – who knows? – probably lose a few pounds.

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