



Central Florida YMCA

Healthy Alternatives for the Holiday Season

Even though the weather isn't quite chilly, we've moved full speed ahead into the holiday season. It is the time of year to gather with family and friends around a table garnished with casseroles, stuffing and a fine bird. The smell of delicious desserts will linger from the kitchen, telling us what will follow the meal. In addition, the onslaught of holiday goodies will begin to invade your workplace, not to mention the many holiday parties that will fill your schedule. It is a tradition that no one can turn away.

Though we're all busy, it's important to make the effort to schedule time for exercising during the next few months. The average person gains three to eight pounds during the holiday season. To help prove that statistic wrong, the Central Florida YMCA would like to offer the following tips to enjoy the upcoming season without feeling the guilt and the gut after the holidays.

Moderation is Key

It's easy to overindulge when everywhere we look we're tempted with food. There are constant parties, gatherings and celebrations. It is the nibbling that can get us into trouble. Everything looks and smells as good as we know it will taste, so why not sample a little bit of everything? In these cases, we should trust the body's reaction and stop eating when feeling full.

Take Time at the Table

It is easy to forget the most important part of the holiday season during the hustle and bustle of the season. While gathered around the table, we should take time to enjoy the company of the family and friends who surround us. It isn't a race to finish the meal, but a time to enjoy the food and the company. The conversation will not only bond us with those close to us, but will slow down our eating so that we're more likely to realize we are full.

Clean Up the Kitchen

Who could guess that washing dishes can burn calories? Well it does, especially when cleaning up for several guests. There is no need to jump up from the table seconds after we're done, but after enjoying the company for a bit, cleaning up the kitchen will get the body up and moving and burning calories.

Take a Walk

So we've finished the first of several meals. Step outside and enjoy the cool weather by taking an easy walk with family and friends. The cool air will be refreshing and invigorating and will also help to burn off a couple of the recently consumed calories.

Hit the Mall

Another way to stay active this holiday season is to shop. Who says that we have to spend money with each visit? Hit the local mall and walk around to simply take in the holiday decoration and enjoy the holiday buzz. It's surprising to learn how many calories we can burn while shopping and it's an easy way to take care of our gift buying as well.

Balancing physical activities with eating during the holiday season is probably the best way to keep off unwanted holiday weight. It's easy to get into the habit of lounging around during this time of year, but it's important to remember that this is the time when physical exercise is needed most...even if it is shopping.

Start your New Year's Resolution Early

Why wait until after the holidays to begin your New Year's Resolution of getting in better shape? With the abundance of food found everywhere throughout the holidays, most people fall out of their regular fitness routine or wait until after the New Year to start one. Having a fitness plan in place before and during the holidays will motivate you and keep you focused. This will help fight the effect that the holiday goodies will have on you.