

## Enjoying the Holidays Guilt-Free

It's that time of the year again when most Americans are bound to gain an extra three to seven pounds of weight.

Let's face it: Trying to eliminate such family traditions as turkey, stuffing, candied sweet potatoes and pecan pie on Thanksgiving is hardly practical.

And that's just the beginning of weeks of traditional Holiday treats in the office, at cocktail parties and feasts shared with family and friends.

So why not develop a game plan early to avoid the weight gain and start the New Year healthy?

If you follow these few simple tips provided by health and fitness professionals and two working women, who are determined to keep their weight loss success on track during the Holiday season, you'll be well on your way to a healthy and happy beginning in 2010.

### **Lost 22 Pounds in 12 Weeks and Still Going Strong**

As a scientist, Lesley Tye works long hours on workdays, which makes it tough to plan her meals.

During meetings, Tye used to gratify her cookie and chocolate cravings, but that has all changed now.

Since joining a medically oriented weight-loss program, Tye has lost 22 pounds in three recent months following a plan of eating five, small healthy meals a day, including oatmeal, a snack bar, lean protein or a salad. She also works out twice a week with a personal trainer and exercises on her own.

"While my body mass index was normal (before starting the program), a Bodyscan showed that the percentage of fat was high," Tye said about her weight loss program.

Tye is facing typical muscle mass loss starting in the 30s and picking up each decade thereafter. To counteract this age-related muscle loss, Tye performs strength-training with her trainer and walks on her own to strengthen her heart. But researchers have long found that a healthy diet and exercise are equally important in the fight to lose weight and maintain a healthy body.

Tye said avoiding Thanksgiving dinner and sweet temptations during this time of the year is impossible.

"You have to live a little, so you have to go into Thanksgiving dinner and look at what you eat and look at the portion sizes and avoid overeating," Tye said. "I don't count calories, but I weigh myself everyday, which allows me to immediately see if I have gained weight. As soon as the dial creeps up, I take action."



## Survival Tips for a Healthier Thanksgiving Dinner

To enjoy a guilt-free Thanksgiving dinner, consider these tips:

1. If you're in charge of Thanksgiving dinner, visit ACE's [Healthy Recipes](#) for Thanksgiving meal choices, including the [Herb-roasted turkey](#), which comes in at 155 calories and 5 grams of fat per serving (without the skin); [stuffing made with chopped veggies, chicken or turkey sausage](#) instead of butter and fatty sausage; [sweet potatoes](#) without the candy; and [pumpkin pie](#) in place of pecan pie, which has 480 calories a slice.
2. If you're worried about food choices at the dinner table, bring your own low-fat or nutritious [party dish](#).
3. Don't skip breakfast or lunch on Thanksgiving Day as this is a sure way to overeat at the dinner table.
4. Remember our bodies aren't meant to handle 2,000-3,000 calories all at once (the typical Thanksgiving meal packs about 3,000 calories) and will store excess calories as fat.
5. Control portion sizes: Draw a 12-inch dinner plate in your mind and divide it into three-inch-sized circles with each one representing one food group: proteins, vegetables and starches. The key is to stay within your circle for each food group. If you like turkey and ham, fit a little of both in one circle.
6. Be mindful of your [alcohol](#) intake: Mixed drinks tend to have a high amount of concentrated sugar and quickly add empty calories. One glass of wine may be reasonable, but remember alcohol contains 7 calories per gram, which makes it nearly twice as fattening as carbohydrates or protein.
7. Be active: Go for a bike ride, a long brisk walk, a run or spend at least one hour at your local gym to burn calories before Thanksgiving dinner. End dinner with a family walk around the neighborhood or some other form of physical activity (e.g., a game of touch football instead of watching it on the tube).

## Prepare Lunches in Advance and Work Out Regularly

Karen Flores is also approaching the Holidays with mixed emotions. The 5'8" financial analyst had lost 8 pounds during a six-week long weight loss challenge sponsored by her local San Diego health club, Fitness Quest 10. But keeping a healthy diet remains a daily struggle for the 168-pound middle-aged woman.

"I'm an all-or-nothing person," Flores readily admitted, adding "so I have to avoid sweet temptations altogether."

To keep on track, Flores works out three days a week with a personal trainer and participates in a cardio-based group exercise class once a week as well. She keeps a food log to avoid cheating. Every Sunday Flores spends time in her kitchen to prepare her lunch meals for the following week. This is a great way to save money and to avoid everyday temptations of buying fast foods or vending machine snacks.

"I cook up the food and pack my lunches with lots of vegetables and lean protein," Flores said.

For the upcoming Holiday season, Flores plans to keep her meals as healthy as possible.

Also, "Having a committed time that I have to be at the gym where someone is expecting me is huge," Flores added. "If I don't have that on my schedule, I won't work out."

To keep on track, Flores plans to continue her regular personal training sessions with Ryan Rogers at Fitness Quest 10 San Diego throughout the Holidays while watching her diet.

Rogers knows about the recurring seasonal struggle of his clients to keep in pre-Thanksgiving shape.

"I think one of the main things is if you fail to plan, you plan to fail," Rogers said. Hence, he tells his clients to start planning before the seduction train of holiday parties and cookie trays gets the best of them.

### **A Fitness Trainer's Advice for Clients**

Among his list of pre-Holiday planning:

1. If you have visitors coming to town, incorporate some type of fun physical activity to keep moving. Granted, if you live in sunny San Diego, the choices are endless, but living in a colder climate shouldn't deter you from putting on skies, snowshoes or from tying a sled around the waist to pull your kids through snow.
2. A lot of clients don't realize that they don't have to be inside a gym with a personal trainer to get their physical activity during the Holidays. Make a plan and stick to your goals.
3. Eating a piece of fruit or drinking a glass of water can help fill you up before going to Holiday parties where sweet treats await in abundance.

Todd Durkin, owner of Fitness Quest 10, said with many clients splurging in the coming weeks with good intentions to get on track on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010 a little intervention now can go a long way.

"Often clients get frustrated and say they will start exercising after the first of the year," Durkin said. "That's too bad, because if they could just chip away between Thanksgiving and the New Year, they wouldn't have to fight so hard to lose the extra weight."