

Strategies To Keep You Going Strong Over The Holidays

- 1) For 300 calories, you could either have a couple handfuls of chips **OR** five oranges. So instead of eating foods like chips, crackers, rice cakes and popcorn to curb your appetite, choose foods like fruits and vegetables which will help keep your blood sugar stable for a longer period of time.
- 2) Plan to exercise before a holiday party or big meal. Why not use all those scrumptious holiday foods as recovery from a hard run or bicycle ride? In the first couple of hours after intense exercise, your body is more sensitive to the hormone insulin, which helps transport sugars to your depleted muscles. All those precious carbohydrates found in starchy holiday dishes like mashed potatoes, or sugars found in cranberry sauce or pumpkin pie are excellent for glycogen replenishment. And the protein you'll get from that holiday turkey meal will help repair damaged tissue. Furthermore, your metabolism is heightened after a hard workout, meaning we're more effective at burning those little "indulgences" that may otherwise pack on the unwanted weight.
- 3) It takes at least 20 minutes for our brains to signal that we're actually full, which means a slow eater will consume less calories before feeling full than someone who races through their meal. So rather than attempting to finish your plate first, see if you can outlast the competition by being the last to finish.
- 4) Doesn't the first bite always taste the best? When looking at brain chemicals signaling "pleasure," scientists have found that we receive less pleasure the more we eat of a food. So rather than feeling like you must eat a full serving of every dessert at a holiday meal, take a bite or two and receive 90 percent of the pleasure at 10 percent of the calories.
- 5) Beware of liquid calories, especially alcohol.
- 6) Don't "hang out" at the appetizer table when socializing at a party. Here's an example:

4 rye crackers with ~1/2 ounce of soft cheese
3 bunches of grapes
3 handfuls of mixed nuts
2 glasses of wine
1 handful M&Ms with nuts
2 pieces broccoli with ~1 Tbsp cream cheese dip

Total: 1,209 calories, 60 g fat (43%), 28 g protein (9%), 110 g carbohydrate (35%)
- 7) Rather than fretting about food, learn to focus on the social aspects of this special time of year, enjoying the company of friends and family.

Enjoy the Holiday Season.

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