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The Quarterly Escape

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Our Team's Top Healthy Holiday Tips

By Karen M. Rzesutko, M.S.ed, ACSM-HFI, NSCA-CPT

The average person gains 7lbs over the holiday season (Thanksgiving to New Years). There are an abundance of parties with amazing food from work to family gatherings. We get the attitude "Hey, it's the Holidays – let's splurge!" Your busy schedule is even busier trying to fit shopping, organizing, baking, and planning get-togethers with friends and family. Stress is added to the plate when you begin to look at all the money you're spending on the perfect gifts, the perfect dinners . . . the perfect holiday. Our team of leading experts in fitness, massage, and nutrition in the Chicagoland area have collaborated their favorite tips to stay healthy over the holidays.

1. Instead of serving appetizers on mass plates, put them on individual little plates already in serving sizes for your guests. This will prevent everyone from overindulging. It's easy to consume 1000 calories quick when picking at appetizer trays! - Karen Rzesutko, Msed, ACSM-HFI, NSCA-CPT
2. Do not go to a party hungry. When at a buffet, look at what is offered before helping yourself. Decide what food you want to splurge on and make sure you get some veggies, fruits, and lean protein. Do not stand or eat in front of where the food is served - out of sight, out of mind – Barbara Fine, RD, LDN
3. If you're going to be drinking alcohol, have a glass of water beforehand and a glass of water along with your cocktail or wine. Alternate sips. – Marirose Malec, LMT
4. Never go to a party on an empty stomach. Before going out, snack on something like protein which is something that will keep you feeling full longer. Many people think that if they don't eat all day, they can eat more later. If you skip meals the day of the party, you will tend to overeat later on. - Lauren Florian, RD, LDN
5. Lingering around the food table or kitchen can cause an increase in unconscious eating -- you could unconsciously eat 200-500 calories and not even feel satisfied! Be realistic. Do not set weight loss goals during this stressful time, focus on weight maintenance. Set your goals up at the start of the new year! – Marla Richards, MS, RD, LDN

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Hungry 4 Nutrition

Breakfast and the Metabolism

Breakfast is the most important meal of the day. Eating breakfast is crucial to jumpstarting and maintaining an efficient metabolism. However, some clients share that they have difficulty eating shortly after waking in the morning and that it's often associated with feeling nauseous. Lori Rowell MS, RD, LDN says this is actually more common in individuals who eat more later in the evening, but it's not always the case.

"In the morning, our brain is going on nothing since the last time we ate was dinner and then we slept for 8 hours," says Jenny Schwartz, RD, LDN. Ideally, a breakfast should be high in fiber, protein, and low in sugar to keep you fuller longer, curb hunger. The brain needs carbohydrates to function, our dietitians recommend trying to eating something within the first hour of waking if possible. If you're going to exercise in the morning, you need carbohydrates for workout fuel. Lack of food will hinder exercise performance and can even cause dizziness.

"You don't have to eat the "typical" breakfast," says Rowell. Our dietitians suggest to eat something small in the morning (a 100-200 calorie mini breakfast) and then have a snack, (a 100-200 calorie snack) an hour or two later when hunger increases. Some of their mini-breakfast suggestions include:

- a piece of fruit
- Gatorade
- yogurt smoothie
- a scoop of peanut butter on a slice of whole grain bread
- sugar free Carnation Instant Breakfast with skim milk

"Try some different foods in the morning in order to see if some foods may work better for you (make you less nauseous)," says Lauren Florian, RD, LDN. "If you still cannot handle food when you get up, make sure you eat something as soon as you feel you can."

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6. At holiday meal time, try to have a small bowl of salad or fruit before you start in on the meal. – Marisa Bobbe, MS, RD, LDN
7. Taking 10-minutes of your day to journal what you're thankful for during the holidays is sure to lighten any feelings of distress. – Jenny Routheau, BS, NSCA-CPT.
8. Stay away from heavy/sugary mixed drinks such as chocolate martinis, Baileys, and juice mixers. Stick with beer, wine, or liquor mixed with a diet mixer or soda water. – Liz Beatty, MS, RD, LDN.
9. Take time to enjoy winter activities. I recommend throwing snowballs at your loved ones and neighbors. - Steven Hirschberg, LMT
10. Listen to upbeat music before going to a party to get in a good mood. - Alima Ramnarine, MS Certified Yoga Teacher
11. The holiday season can be stressful. It's important to find your de-stressor to minimize chances of high blood pressure, anxiety, etc, which can lead to worse situations than just stress. Take a little time everyday to focus on deep breathing. When things are really tough, just let it all go and get a run in or book a massage. Your health is worth making time to de-stress. - Cyrus Dowlatshi, LMT.
12. After you have a few bags full of holiday goodies, do a few bicep curls and upright rows with them! While walking through the malls, try to stick to only buying items on your list and to a timeline to keep you from wandering to the nearby soft buttery pretzel stand! – Lizz Loring, BS, ACSM-HFI
13. Enjoy your time, but do everything in moderation. Don't deny yourself the pleasures of good food and fun time, but also don't forget to do some type of physical activity to keep the balance. – Harris Sophocleous, MS, NSCA-CSCS.

Remember when it all comes down to it, the holidays are about friends and family and creating memories. Be healthy. Be happy. Enjoy life! Happy Holidays from the Escape 2 Fitness team!

The Healthy Traveler

Active Family Vacation Ideas

Travelling with the family is the perfect time to instill healthy habits. Especially when it's disguised with family fun and outside of the everyday routine. Try some of our fun games that encourage activity and healthy eating.

Steppin for Stars

Buy each family member a pedometer and make a contest to see who can accumulate the most steps or miles over the trip. Each day have the family members earn stars for X amount of steps. This way they stay accountable daily and the game doesn't get stale. Be sure to have guidelines so the contest is fair.

The Whine Dance

Kids can sometimes get "cranky" and "whiney" while travelling. To keep your sanity and your stress levels down, create a game that each time someone complains, the whole family has to do a goofy dance. Not only will tension be broken with a smile or laugh, but stress levels will be kept at a low level.

Rainbow Meals

Since adding variety to our diet assures we're getting a variety of nutrients, play Rainbow Meals with your family. Each day the family needs to eat food from each color of the rainbow to earn a special treat at the end of the day, i.e. A souvenir from the vacation spot.

Fitness Bucks

Bring play money on your trip. Create a reward system associated with healthy fitness and nutrition activities. For example, earn \$2.00 for eating a piece of fruit or earn \$3.00 for taking the stairs in the hotel or \$5.00 for not eating high-sugar foods like candy.

INCENTIVES

Remember, rewards or incentives should NEVER be related to food or inactivity. For example, do not reward with ice cream or more television time. Here are some great reward ideas:

- Travel Souvenir
- Choice of Event for the Next Day
- Alone time with one of the parents

Kids' Korner



Nutrition Tips for Parents

By Liz Beatty, MS, RD, LDN

When I had worked in pediatrics, I spent a lot of time talking with parents of obese children. Some of the stories I heard would blow you away! Kids eating whole pizzas, 10 sodas per day, 2 year olds drinking coffee. Some kids went weeks without a single glass of plain water. The following tips will help parents guide their children toward a life of health.

1. There is some thought that food preferences can be developed in the womb. Therefore be sure to eat healthy while you are carrying your little one.
2. When they start solid foods, give them fruits and vegetables with all meals. Start them on whole wheat/whole grain bread rather than white. This teaches them to enjoy healthy foods rather than craving more unhealthy foods.
3. It is very important that you do not use food as treats/rewards for your children. Never take them to McDonalds because they are "good."
4. Withholding too much candy/soda/chips from children will make them more likely to overindulge when the parent is not around. Let your child have these foods once in a while, just don't over do it. It is important for your child to see that all foods, if taken in the right amounts, can fit into their diet.
5. Kids love sweet beverages. Offer sugar-free beverages such as Crystal Light, sugar-free Kool-aid, or diet soda. If you give your child juice, do not give more than 4 oz per day. Over consuming liquid calories is a very bad habit that is often begun in early childhood. Liquid calories are a HUGE contributor to our country's obesity epidemic.
6. Children need the extra fat in whole milk when they are under two. After two years of age, they should gradually be switched to skim milk (it is hard for kids to go straight from whole to skim so stair-step them down instead, do 2% for a month or so, then go to 1%) Skim and whole milk provide the same nutrient value, just less fat in the skim.

Ask Escape

If the massage is painful, should I tell the massage therapist or does that mean I have a knot that really needs to be worked out and I should just deal with the pain?

Our massage therapists agree that a client should never be in pain and that clients need to communicate to the massage therapist if they are experiencing pain. "Each client has their own pain tolerance. One client may be able to handle more pressure than another," says Dan Volz, LMT. "They should feel a therapeutic hurt or a "hurts so good" pain. A client should always feel that they are in control of the massage session," says Volz.

Clients who have several tender points or "knots" may experience higher levels of discomfort. Licensed Massage Therapist Elio Troncoso recommends telling the therapist to go lighter and to not wait too long between massages, "Discuss getting another massage sooner than later (ideally no more than 2 or 3 weeks between massages). The therapist should be able to go deeper with less pain then," he says.

"If the client has tender points, there will be a degree of discomfort, and I will ask the client to rate that discomfort on a pain scale from 1 to 10 (10 being highly unbearable pain)," says Steven Hirschberg, LMT. "I want to work at a level between 4 and 6, which translates into discomfort, but not pain. If the client is taking medication to inhibit pain, I will work between a 2 and 4. If the client is experienced with deep tissue massage, then I might take that pain level to a 7."

Licensed Massage Therapist Marirose Malec provides a good rule of thumb, "Pain that you cannot breathe through or pain that causes you to tighten up other muscles to "tolerate" the pain, is too much pressure," says Malec.

I heard if you consume too much protein in a sitting that your body will store what it cannot digest as protein (the excess) as fat? Is this true? How much protein can the body digest in a sitting?

If someone consumes too many calories, the body will store the food as fat. Fat stores best for future needed fuel. So yes, too much protein can be stored as fat.

"Part of protein is converted into urea and excreted out and the rest is converted into glucose and used as an energy substrate. If it is not used for energy right away it is store as glycogen. If you are consuming enough carbohydrates in your diet which are replacing the glycogen stores, then a small portion of the glycogen from protein is being stored as fat. Some of that protein is also given off as heat from the body," says Lauren Florian, RD, LDN

The goal is too eat a balanced meal or snack with carbohydrates, protein, and fat. This will provide energy and will hopefully meet your body's needs in terms of calories and nutrients.

"As far as how much protein we can digest in one sitting; it depends on your metabolism and your lean body mass," says Jenny Schwartz, RD, LDN. "There is no real standard in this case. Each person metabolizes things at different rates depending on their resting metabolism, and many other factors. Unfortunately, there is no real method to detect this," says Lori Rowell MS, RD, LDN

Lauren Florian, RD, LDN informs that there are guidelines for daily protein consumption: for strength training athletes around 1.4-1.7 gm protein per kg of body wt/day is recommended. For adults, who are active, the recommendations range from 0.8 gm - 1.2 gm protein/kg/day.

Do you have questions for the Escape 2 Fitness professional team? Please write to us at getfit@escape2fitness.com.



Phone: 312-222-1414 Fax: 312-222-1418

Email: Contactus@escape2fitness.com

www.escape2fitness.com

Mailing Address: 446 N. Wells, Suite, 344, Chicago, IL 60610