

HEALTH NEWS

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5 Best Ways to Stay Healthy Between Christmas and New Year's

Written by Amy Jamieson on December 26, 2019 — [Fact checked](#) by Maria Gifford



Experts recommend staying hydrated, choosing nutritious foods, and exercising wherever you can as ways to stay healthy after Christmas. Getty Images

"I'll get back on track in January."

You may be familiar with this commonly repeated line when you fall off the health and fitness wagon during the holidays.

The period between Christmas and New Year's Day is a minefield of food, festivities, and alcohol that can take you off your regular course.

To help you stay on track, Healthline asked experts to share quality tips for staying healthy during the holidays.

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Make smart food choices



You'll have many obligations over the holiday period, but overeating at every single party or gathering isn't one of them.

"If you're headed out to dinner or a holiday party, spoil your appetite first," said [Amy Shapiro](#), MS, RD, CDN, the founder and director of [Real Nutrition NYC](#).

That way you're less likely to inhale all the holiday goodies.

"Have a snack an hour or so beforehand so you don't show up starving," Shapiro told [Healthline](#). "When you're hungry, you tend to make poor food

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available, and make choices based on what you're craving and what you actually want."

Shapiro recommends filling half of your plate with vegetables every time.

"Then take the other half of your plate and split it into quarters," she said.

"One quarter for carbs and one quarter for protein. These are perfect portions to be satisfied, not stuffed."

Stay hydrated

We hate to harsh your holiday mellow, but drinking water is a healthy strategy for holiday gatherings.

It's recommended that you drink eight 8-ounce glasses of water a day.

"Without adequate hydration, we often feel hungry, sluggish, and tired," Shapiro noted. "This can cause us to miss workouts, snack on unhealthy foods, and reach for excess caffeine. Your goal, every time you reach for a snack, should be to drink a glass of water first."

It's also good practice to set limits on alcoholic beverages.

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You don't have to take a hard pass on the spiked eggnog or holiday cosmos. Just drink smart.

"Alcohol is part of the holiday 'spirit.' My suggestion is to limit your quantity," Splaver told Healthline. "Have a glass of wine, and if you're still craving alcohol, try a glass of seltzer with a twist and see if that helps. You never want to feel deprived, but at the same time, why leave yourself open to temptation?"

If you imbibe, be wise about timing.

"Have those earlier in the evening and not later in the night, because alcohol can disrupt your sleep," [Terry Cralle](#), MS, RN, CPHQ, a registered nurse and sleep expert with the [Better Sleep Council](#), told Healthline.

"Be sure to consume plenty of water to stay hydrated, too. An easy way to do this is to alternate each alcoholic drink with a glass of water," she said.

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Get a good night's sleep

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A restful night's sleep doesn't just feel fabulous. It sets you up for success.

"Sufficient sleep is essential for good mood, good health, and good outlook — exactly what you want during the holidays," Cralle said.

"Even if you have holiday travel plans, be sure to make time for sleep. Keep in mind that consistency is key, so try your best to maintain your regular bed and wake times, even when traveling," she said.

Maintaining a relaxing bedtime routine can help with that. It can "help transition your mind and body from wake to sleep," she added.

The holidays will leave many of us running ragged, which isn't good on anyone's body.

"No matter how busy you are, don't stay up later or wake up earlier in order to get more done," Cralle noted. "You're better off getting all of your sleep at night. A well-rested person gets more done and does it better than a sleep-deprived person."

Think outside the gym

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The nearest treadmill may be miles from where you are. So, if you're on a regularly scheduled fitness schedule, you'll need to get creative.

That could translate to squeezing in walks after big meals or calisthenics in the kitchen.

"The holiday season is full of travel as we go from city to city to see friends and family," said certified personal trainer Jackie Wilson, founder and CEO of New York City's [Nova Fitness Studios](#).

"As such, gym access may be difficult. Incorporate bodyweight movements such as squats, lunges, shoulder taps, and burpees, and take your fitness on the road with you," he said.

Do your best to get your exercise time in, no matter how small.

"A modified or condensed workout is better than a missed workout," Wilson told Healthline. "Smaller workouts will help you keep off unwanted pounds during the holiday season."

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Don't wait until January

A few bumps in the road don't have to turn into a train wreck when it comes to eating well and staying active during the holidays. Get back on the straight and narrow sooner, not later.

"If you fall off your exercise schedule or healthy eating plan, remember: Don't wait for Monday or the new year. Get back on track right away," Shapiro said.

"A small blip in your routine won't wreck your goals or your progress, but a weekend full of indulgences or lack of sleep will throw you off a lot longer," she said.



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