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## Fitness Tips

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by Cari Draft Elliott, BS, CPT - ACE-Certified Personal Trainer

How can I make sure I don't gain weight during the holidays?

**Question:** *Every year at this time I find myself at holiday gatherings several times a week, even at work, and I literally cannot keep myself away from the incredible food! How can I make sure I don't gain weight during the holidays?*

**Answer:** Typical weight gain for the average American between Thanksgiving and New Years is three to five pounds... minimum! This can be avoided, with a little effort, and five easy tips:

1. **LIMIT ALCOHOL** - Drink a glass of water in between each cocktail, and opt for wine or light beer instead of the foo-foo calorie-filled drinks.
2. **USE THE SMALLER PLATE AT THE BUFFET** - Have a choice between the dinner plate and the smaller salad plate? Use the smaller one! People eat less when using smaller plates, and your appetite won't know the difference.
3. **SQUEEZE IN EXERCISE** - Yes, the holiday time is busy, and maybe you won't have time for your usual workouts, but you can still squeeze in a quick after-dinner walk or hike in the snow.
4. **DON'T SKIMP ON SLEEP** - Not only is it bad for your immune system this time of year, but your metabolism runs more smoothly when you get enough sleep. Studies have shown that sleep deprivation can cause an increase in appetite, because cortisol (stress hormone) levels increase, and also can lead to an increase in fat storage.
5. **DON'T SHOW UP HUNGRY** - Just before you leave for the event, have a piece of fruit and a small glass of skim milk. This combination can help you feel full before you even make it to the tempting treats.

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