



A dozen ways to keep at bay stray pounds of the holidays

With the caloric damage of Thanksgiving under our belts, it's time to think about ways to minimize further holiday deposits to the belly and butt. Taking advantage of a selection of small tricks can help the new year arrive without the need for a weight-related resolution.

Clearly, it is not a time of the year to be too hyper about counting calories. The stress of obsessing about calories in holiday social settings could be worse on health than just having a good time. Happiness is good for health. But here are a few small things that, in combination, can add up to make a difference.

1. If you are doing something that can be done sitting or standing, do it standing. Standing requires about twice as many calories as sitting.

2. When possible, pick up your walking pace. When you switch from a 2 mph stroll to a brisk 4 mph walk, you burn up almost twice as many calories per minute.

3. Most of us thrive on positive feedback. Consider getting a pedometer. These inexpensive little gadgets simply count how many steps you take. Walk 2,000 steps and you have proof you

covered about a mile.

The heavier you are, the more calories you burn per mile of walking. For a frame of reference, a 150-pound person expends about 85 calories to cover a mile, while a 250-pound person uses up about 135 calories.

4. Fit in short bouts of activity — it adds up. One study found that women doing three 10-minute bouts of brisk walking a day had a greater reduction in their waist size than women doing one 30-minute bout per day of the same exercise.

5. Don't make a meal out of all goodies. Meeting protein and other nutrient needs benefits the immune system and reduces the risk of picking up a seasonal cold or flu virus. If the food environment is getting too out of balance, a multivitamin/mineral supplement can make sense.

6. Before going to a party that will have loads of calorie-laden treats, have a small meal that is primarily high in protein such as chicken, fish, meat, cottage cheese, Greek yogurt or even a protein drink or bar. Protein has a high satiety value and will help to quell your appetite.

7. Pay special attention to alcohol calories. That's easier said

than done because most containers don't have calorie information. Beer can provide 65 to more than 300 calories per 12-ounce bottle. Alcohol is a source of calories, so higher-alcohol beers have more calories. Wines and mixed drinks can vary greatly in calorie content as well.

8. Don't skip meals. When you do, it is harder to resist eating too much of those calorie-rich goodies.

9. Use malls for walking. If you are lucky and get a parking space close to the store you want to shop at, consider walking past the store and do an aerobic double-speed window-shopping workout and circle back to the store.

10. Before you load up with too many packages, take the stairs rather than the elevator or escalator. Everything adds up.

11. Pace yourself on those long shopping sprees. Start and stay well hydrated.

12. Recruit a friend who matches your shopping endurance capacity for those long shopathons. Set a limit on dollars spent per mile of shopping, but do your part to support the economic recovery.

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