



HOLIDAY TIP SHEET

1 Don't abandon your healthy habits.

You may end up eating a little more sugar or drinking a little more alcohol this next month than you usually do. Now is not the time to also stop exercising or ease up on the vegetables. Keep your healthy habits going and those holiday indulgences will do a lot less damage.

Schedule in time for a brisk walk before getting dressed for the party. Once there, load up at the raw vegetable platter before hitting the cookie tray. If you are traveling, make sure you do a search for gyms nearby where you are staying, or pack resistance bands, exercise gear, and running shoes.

2 Save it for the good stuff.

There are lots of treats and temptations around this time of year but not all of them are worth indulging in. Instead of mindlessly noshing on every single thing that crosses your path, hold out for the stuff that's really worth it.

3 Show up for it.

It's not an indulgence if you have no memory of the experience! When eating something purely for pleasure, be sure to be there when it happens. Instead of mindlessly munching on M&Ms while you fill in your expense report, stop what you're doing and savor every one. Save the blue ones for last and linger even longer over those.

4 Savor then stop.

A lot of us confuse indulgence with over-indulgence. An indulgence feels good. Over-indulgence does not. Once you've decided what you're going to have and you've set aside time to mindfully enjoy it, decide ahead of time how much you're going to have. Don't sit down with the entire carton of ice cream or bag of barbecue chips. Serve yourself up an indulgent serving and put the rest away. Resist the inevitable urge to go back for seconds as soon as the bowl is empty. Instead, think for a few moments about how much you enjoyed your treat and then turn your attention to something else.

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5 Employ Variety Strategically.

We tend to eat more when there is lots of variety to choose from and this often gets us into trouble at parties. If there are 12 different types of cookies on offer, we're likely to crunch through far more than we would if presented with just one or two options. Luckily, this tendency can just as easily be turned into an advantage.

Don't keep dozens of different snacks and treats around the house. Pick one or two favorites and leave it at that. But when it comes to putting together the vegetable platter, don't stop with the usual carrots and celery. Pile on veggies of all different colors, shapes, textures, and flavors: grape tomatoes, cauliflower florets, red peppers, Belgian endive scoops, radishes, blanched asparagus. Offer a colorful variety of healthy dip options as well such as hummus, salsa, roasted eggplant—but maybe just one cheese or sour-cream based dip. You and your guests will enjoy a bountiful spread—with none of the remorse.

6 Commit to keeping tabs.

We really do only manage what we measure. If we weigh ourselves regularly throughout the holiday season, we're less likely to discover on January 1st that we've gained ten pounds without realizing it. And if we keep a rough tally of how many times per week we're exercising or the number of drinks that we consume on a daily basis, we're much more likely to stay closer to our goals.

7 Every little bit counts.

Remember that when it comes to exercise every little bit helps. Instead of falling into the all-or-nothing trap ("I don't have time for a 45-minute workout so I will just skip it altogether."), squeeze in what you can and reap the benefits.

8 Keep your perspective.

Obviously, eating a lot of junk food and skipping your workouts on a regular basis is not a recipe for good health. After a while, it's not even particularly enjoyable. But an occasional indulgence or lapse--in the context of a healthy lifestyle --is not going to send you to an early grave. Remember that it's not what you do on your worst day or your best day that matters but what you do most days that counts.