



# Beaverdale

## 24/7 X-Press Newsletter

*Fitness*

December 2008

*Pilates*

### Stay active and avoid gaining weight this holiday season!

THE major concern people have about their health and fitness during the holidays is how to avoid gaining weight. And we should be concerned. The holiday season is when people gain the most weight each year. So, this newsletter issue is going to be devoted to giving you ideas for maintaining weight and staying fit from Thanksgiving through New Years (and really all through the year).

#### Q & A: How can I avoid gaining weight during the holidays?

This is the correct question to be asking. The holidays are not a great time to try to lose weight, but instead you should strive to make it through them without adding any more weight. And most of this weight gain stays and does not go away during the rest of the year unless you make a concerted effort to get rid of it. It's much easier to avoid it in the first place! Most people's annual weight gain comes during the Thanksgiving through New Years time period. That's not hard to believe, given that there are so many holiday functions surrounded by food. Try to think of a gathering which doesn't provide food, and there are many that have food as the focus such as Thanksgiving itself.

There are of course two main ways to try to avoid weight gain during the holidays – try to avoid excess eating and maintain or even increase your exercise program. Both are difficult to do but it is worth trying. Failure to even try means almost certain weight gain.

Let's tackle the eating part first. Holidays are meant to be enjoyed so if you want to partake in some extra special holiday foods you may, but you need to have a plan. Here are some points to consider as part of your plan:

- Eat in moderation – go ahead and have one of those Christmas cookies or pieces of fudge, but stop there. Is eating six going to feel six times better than eating one?
- Take small servings of special desserts or other holiday foods. The first few bites are the best and give you the pleasure and sensation.
- Use smaller plates at parties. People tend to fill up their plates so use a small one to avoid filling up a large one. Same goes for drinking. So instead of filling up that tall glass with egg nog, try using a juice or wine glass.
- Many people enjoy alcoholic beverages over the holidays. Just remember that alcohol is the ultimate empty calorie beverage. Every gram of alcohol has 7 calories compared to a gram of carbohydrate or protein which have 4 (fat has 9). Alcohol has no nutritional value. You don't need to avoid it if you don't want to, but if you do partake, do so in moderation for your health.
- Ask for help from your friends or spouse when going out to a party. Tell them that you are going to try to be good and not scarf down tons of goodies. Give them permission to remind you of your promise and help you resist the temptations. Promise to do the same for them.
- Be sure you are eating healthfully most of the time. This includes fruits, vegetables and lean protein. If you do indulge in some holiday treats, at least you have gotten good nutrition from your other meals. Also, eating healthfully can help you feel full and better resist the temptation to snack on holiday treats.

- Keep treats out of your house. If you have a plate of cookies sitting on your counter, you will eat them. No amount of will power can overcome that temptation!
- When feeling lacking in will power, remind yourself: **Once over the lips, forever on the hips!** Are a few seconds of pleasure worth having extra weight for weeks or months?

Now for the exercise part.

- Don't stop or reduce your exercise routine. People are very busy during the holiday season but try not to sacrifice your exercise habit. You need to burn off more calories to burn off the extra you will probably consume this season.
- Even though you may feel busy and stressed and not have time to exercise, remember that exercise is a great stress reliever and makes you feel better and more alert. You can be more productive during the rest of your hours in a day if you keep up with your exercise program.
- Reserve your exercise time as 'Your Time'. Don't let people or events take Your Time away from you. Everyone needs some time to spend improving themselves and no time is more important than the holidays.
- Avoid having to make a New Years resolution to lose weight, including the newly gained weight from the holidays. Instead, make it easier and don't let yourself gain weight during the time leading up to New Years.

**Quick Fit Tip of the Month:** Did you know that both walking and running one mile burns about 100 calories? People are surprised to learn this, but you can run a mile a lot faster than walking, so running burns more calories per minute. Is that 500 calorie piece of cheesecake really worth walking five miles for?

This newsletter is issued once a month and you can pick it up at the fitness center or if you would like it delivered to your inbox (in full color!) by email, just send us an email at [dertl@7flags.com](mailto:dertl@7flags.com) and we will add you to our mailing list.

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