

## Create healthy recipes using as little processed, high-sugar ...

But it can be done. Take it from Delana Ivey, who dropped most of her 150 excess pounds over the winter months when she hit the treadmill hard and got a grip on why she ate so much.

"What got me really motivated was becoming straight with myself," said Ivey, now a local wellness coach and bodybuilding competitor. "It's kind of taking that onion and peeling it and going inside yourself."

Local fitness and nutrition experts offer their best ideas -- 13 ways to fitness -- to keep you as healthy as possible this holiday and winter season.

"Have a contest within your family, co-workers or group of friends to see who can stay the healthiest through Jan. 15. The winner -- the person who consistently exercises on a daily basis and does not gain or even loses weight -- receives a spa treatment or gift card to a favorite sporting-goods store. At the beginning, collect money for the prize from each person.

"At holiday events, stick to a glass or two of beer or wine (red wine provides heart healthy benefits) because you know how many calories in those drinks. Mixed drinks usually contain many more calories. Intersperse your drinking with sparkling water or club soda and lemon/lime, which has no calories.

"Make it a point to exercise every day, no matter what the weather. There is no such thing as bad weather, only inappropriate clothing. Dress for the weather and you will stay warm while outside and get fresh air that we lack in the winter months.

"Sign up for a running, swimming or biking event for January, February, March and April to keep your training going throughout the challenging winter months. You can swim the Indy Swimfit one-hour swim, which raises money for the YMCA Invest in Youth Program." -- **Sharon McGoff, health fitness specialist, owner of Fit 4 Life Coaching**

"When I have a client who drinks too much soda, regular or diet, I tell them to drink water for thirst and only sips of soda or sweet drinks just for the taste of it. Try keeping a 12-ounce bottle in the refrigerator, rather than opening a can or pouring a whole glass, and make it last one to two days. This often works, while going off soda "cold turkey" doesn't.

"The month of December is a great time to find creative outlets that give you something to do when you're not eating. Planning for the holidays, decorating, wrapping, playing music, making crafts and engaging in good conversations with friends and family can help you relax, re-energize and reduce anxiety. All of that goes a long way to help you avoid mindless or impulsive eating. Try to keep everything in perspective and don't let the activities become overwhelming." -- **Kim Woock, registered dietitian, Real Eating, nutrition counseling**

"My best advice is to have a mental plan of how much and what you are going to eat and drink at parties and other events, even at the office. At parties, know what kind of food is going to be served, and don't ever go to holiday events hungry. Watch your alcohol -- have one drink and one plate of food, and walk away from the buffet." -- **Delana Ivey, wellness coach, owner of Creating Core Change**

"One way to stay motivated toward your goals is to keep a reminder with you at all times. You can wear bracelets to remind you of progress toward your goals. Start with one bracelet, attach a specific goal to it, and write down its importance. Every time you reach a goal, wear another bracelet. It's a constant reminder staring at you when you're tempted to grab something unhealthy to eat or when writing a "to-do" list.

"Winter sports are a great option -- cross-country skiing, hiking, horseback riding and enjoying our local parks. If people embrace and prepare for winter, they can actually find ways to enjoy the snow and outdoors. We are so used to running inside when it's cold, but if you dress properly there is so much to experience outdoors. Plus, you can work all kinds of new muscles by walking in the snow.

"During the winter, dedicate 10 to 15 minutes every morning to some type of "warm-up" for the day after getting out of bed. By practicing yoga, taking a walk, doing moving/dynamic stretches, you can warm up your body, get blood flowing and start the day on a healthy note. Getting your body moving right away in the morning will provide multiple mind/body benefits." -- **Erin Light, fitness coach, Clarian Bariatrics**

"Start new traditions that keep you active. Develop a list of 12 new things to do during December -- anything from a yoga class or volunteering at a shelter to trying a new healthy food or running a 5K race. My family has a tradition called Ping Pong Olympics. We play for hours each Thanksgiving and Christmas. This keeps our hands busy so we're not eating, and we move enough to break a serious sweat.

"You can see how you would look if you lost anywhere from 10 to 50 pounds or if you gained that much on "virtual weight loss" (for example, [www.myvirtualmodel.com](http://www.myvirtualmodel.com), [www.weightview.com](http://www.weightview.com)). Hang the photo on the refrigerator to keep you motivated to lose or not gain weight.

"Keep fruit in the house and eat some for dessert, especially on days you don't go to parties when you'll have sweets. That way, you'll still get a sweet-tooth fix, but in a healthy way.

"If exercise is hard to squeeze in, try to be "in-efficient" when at the shopping mall. Walk from one end to the other and back again, instead of just going from one store to the next.

"If you think you might drink more alcohol during the holidays, offset those additional calories. Give up soda, heavy coffee drinks and try to stick with water and sugar free tea for beverages. Drinks rarely make you feel full, but they can have tons of calories." -- **Laura Minor, personal trainer, owner of So.Be.Fit Fitness & Wellness Studio**

"The winter months seem to be associated with comfort eating. If you combine that with bad food choices, that will usually lead to extra pounds of fat. Make it a point to keep healthy food choices at home. Use the extra time indoors to become a part-time gourmet chef. Create healthy recipes using as little processed, high-sugar and high- saturated-fat foods as possible.

"Continue to make yourself a priority. Remember to take time to maintain or improve your complete wellness -- mental, physical and emotional. You can do this by keeping your regular fitness center visits or your planned exercise routine, getting a massage or even journaling at night.

"Cold weather often results in increasing the amount of television or movies you watch. You can make TV watching more active by using every commercial break to do some form of exercise or stretching. Try front bridges, push ups and squats." -- **Daniel L. Underwood, personal trainer, owner of U-Turn Fitness, Health & Wellness**

"Practice strength training during "down" times while doing other activities. Do counter pushups while waiting for water to boil or the oven to heat up. Keep your body stiff, bend elbows to lower body to counter, exhale and straighten arms to starting position. Do pile squats: Toes out with wide legs, lower your body, keeping weight on heels. Stand up and squeeze glutes." -- **Kris Simpson, personal trainer, National Institute for Fitness and Sport**

"When you are monetarily committed, you are more likely to stick with an exercise program. Hiring a trainer or going to a group class will put exercise on your schedule. You won't want to waste the investment. Even when walking with a friend, put it on your calendar and stick to that day and time.

"If you are just starting an exercise program, choose something you genuinely enjoy doing. Look for something like a new group training session at your gym or try a boot camp workout. Group Pilates sessions are a fun alternative to the traditional one-on-one training and can be more affordable.

"Instead of all or nothing, think some. Don't kill yourself trying to do three or four workouts a week if you know during this hectic holiday time you can only realistically fit in two. You will be less likely to bail on your fitness attempts if they are realistic, achievable and fun." -- **Memer Hoeltzel, Pilates instructor, owner of Pilates on Penn**

"Since you know you'll likely overeat over the holidays, prepare for it. Work out harder the day before and the day after you'll be eating more than usual. Have a set routine ahead of time that is a little harder. Increase the intensity level, or spend more time on it. The best cardio activity you can do is the one you enjoy the most.

"Nintendo Wii Fit is a good activity to try at home. It's as effective as hitting the weights or going to a gym, but it's better than doing nothing. It's all about being active, staying in motion." -- **Marc Smith, personal trainer, LA Fitness**

"As a personal trainer, my favorite workout tool is a heart-rate monitor because it allows me to make the most effective use of my time. During the holidays, remember that a shorter workout is better than no workout. A harder but shorter workout will shock your body into change. Invest in a session with a personal trainer to develop a full body routine you can do when you're rushed.

"Engage in fun and family bonding activities that increase your heart rate, while keeping you in the holiday spirit. Building a snowman, shoveling your driveway and singing holiday carols will all burn extra calories while boosting your immune system.

"During the holidays, focus on portion control and proper food choices. Develop an eating plan that will set you on a path to maintain or lose during the holidays by using free Websites, such as [www.dailyplate.com](http://www.dailyplate.com), [www.sparkpeople.com](http://www.sparkpeople.com) and [www.fitday.com](http://www.fitday.com)." -- **Hadley Agner, lead personal trainer at Push! Fitness for Women**

"A moment of deep breathing and quiet meditation can instill a sense of balance during the hectic holiday season. Using an eye pillow can create sensory withdrawal, which is helpful in achieving quiet calm in the body and mind. Spending time relaxing on your back, connecting to your breath, is a great way to escape and relieve stress.

"As we indulge in holiday treats and spirits, it's important to sweat and cleanse the body of the residual toxins and impurities these holiday delights leave behind. A detoxifying heated yoga class, offered at Invoke, can help to release what your body doesn't need and bring you back to a state of balance. Twisted and inverted positions help to stimulate the internal organs and digestion.

"Find a balance in a Pilates mat with ballet barre work. Incorporating ballet barre work into a Pilates matt class creates a more balanced body by strengthening and lengthening the muscles in legs." -- **Amy Peddycord, yoga instructor, owner, Invoke Studio**

## About the Author

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