

9 Tips for Staying Active Over the Winter Holidays

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We typically eat more and exercise less during the holidays. If we get too much out of balance with our food intake and our activity output, we may literally be "bursting" with holiday cheer! To help prevent our winter holiday season from coming "apart at the seams," here are 9 tips to fit in some physical activity.

1. **It's a "shoe-in."** As much as you can, wear running or comfortable walking shoes so you can get moving whenever there's an opportunity. Pop a casserole in the oven and head out the door for a walk or jog while it's baking. Park farther away and walk to your destination. Walk the mall before you shop the mall.

2. **Take the stairs.** "In one minute, a 150 pound person burns approximately 10 calories walking upstairs and only 1.5 calories riding an elevator," according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Remember this quote by Joan Welsch and take the stairs, "A man's health can be judged by which he takes two at a time – pills or stairs."

3. **Work out with your mobile device.** Download an app(s) or video(s) for your mobile device (iPad, iPhone, etc.), or watch an online video that will help you get moving. Some of these may be especially helpful when you're traveling and staying in a hotel or with friends. Avoid workouts with lots of noisy activity that can bring management to your hotel door. Use your favorite search engine or check with the app store for your mobile device to find apps and videos that inspire you.

For starters, check out this 10-minute YouTube video from my colleague Kayla Cologrove, a Registered Dietitian, Certified Personal Trainer, and former All-American athlete at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. This set of exercises will help get your heart rate up and works various muscle groups. Watch it on your mobile device (or TV, if you have access to one) at: <http://youtu.be/EOmSQJCwEJI>



"There is no bad weather, only bad clothing," according to a saying generally attributed to Scandinavian origin. Dress warmly, and enjoy a winter wonderland.

4. **Find trails and tracks before you travel.** Visit the USA Track & Field website at <http://www.usatf.org/routes> to find routes for walking or running in your destination city. Check with your host or hotel about the safety of the routes and for additional suggestions. (Prior to a recent trip, my husband and I searched this website and discovered a path near our hotel that was perfect for us.)
5. **Try some tempting tunes.** If you like to work out to music, “gift” yourself with some new tunes to get motivated. For example, searching for “holiday fitness music” or “Christmas fitness music” in the iTunes store yielded several downloadable albums for the winter holiday season. A similar search in the “MP3 Music” category on Amazon.com also found several tunes. Check your favorite music source site. Or, make your own playlist.
6. **Clean your house.** Set aside several hours a day every week to REALLY clean your house. Bending, squatting, running up and down stairs, standing while folding and putting away laundry, etc. all burn calories. You’ll get some workouts in the old-fashioned way!
7. **Look for a holiday fun run.** Fun runs are often held over the holidays. There is usually a small fee and they’re open to everyone, from runners to people who meander along the trail with friends. They are usually 5K runs (3.1 miles). Get in the back of the pack when starting if you plan to set a more leisurely pace. Invite your friends, and plan on an outing with coffee or a meal together afterwards. You’ll feel better physically and mentally for it.
8. **Build activity into family visits and outings.** Encourage house guests to bring workout clothes suitable for walking or perhaps activities at a local health club. My sisters came with running/walking shoes and outdoor wear; we managed three brisk, 2-mile walks during a five day visit. An added benefit: by going outside, we didn’t eat all the holiday leftovers lurking in the house.
9. **Fly with wheels (or a backpack).** If you're flying during the holidays, use the time between flights to get in some activity. If time allows, walk to a far-away gate vs. taking a “people mover.” Instead of waiting at your gate, walk until you can board your flight. If you are hauling carry-on luggage, make it easier and more comfortable to move by using a wheeled suitcase or a backpack.

