

Tips For Getting Rid Of Those Pesky Holiday Pounds

The vicious cycle happens year in and year out. There's Thanksgiving with its turkey, stuffing and pumpkin pie.

By the time you've finished off those leftovers, the Christmas cookies are baking in the oven and the gourmet food baskets are arriving at the office.

Come Christmas, your pants are already starting to feel snug.

So now it's the new year and you

are a new pants size. Don't panic or head straight to the department store for a whole new wardrobe.

Exercise and follow these tips instead, and you'll have your body back on track in no time.

Watch your portions. It's not what you eat but how much you eat.

There's no need to keep certain foods off-limits. With that mindset you're bound to want them more

and when you do satisfy that craving, you'll only feel guilty.

Instead, fill your plate with lean meat, steamed or sauteed veggies and healthy salads. And of course sample those other favorite but not-so-healthy foods, but in moderation.

Calories cannot be saved for later. In theory it seems like a good idea: Skip breakfast, maybe even lunch, and eat everything you want at dinner.

The problem, however, is that you're so hungry by the time you get to dinner you end up overeating.

Instead, eat a sensible, healthy breakfast and lunch and then follow the portion-control rules for dinner. That way, you're less likely to overeat or make bad decisions.

Don't confuse thirst with hun-

ger. Before you head back for second helpings or pop open that tin of cookies for a midday snack, make sure you're really hungry and not just dehydrated.

It's easy to confuse the two, since your stomach makes noises to signal both.

While cooking or waiting for dinner, sip some water. Also, when you head to the mall to return that ugly sweater from Aunt Ida, take a bottle of water with you as well as some healthy snacks.

It's good to stay hydrated in the hot, stuffy stores, and if the water doesn't seem to do the trick, at least you'll have something healthy to snack on and won't be tempted to indulge in the food court's often unhealthy options.

Avoid pressure eating. At the

holiday table you've likely heard cries like, "Dear, you've hardly eaten a thing!" "It's the holidays. Have a second helping!" or "You must try the creamed spinach and the bread stuffing!"

Often during holiday dinners, so much is going on that you ignore how quickly you're eating or who's putting what on your plate.

Now that the holidays are over, slow down. Take the time to listen to your body, see what it's saying and respond with conscious choices.

Stay positive. It's not impossible to fit back into your favorite jeans. When you sit down for a meal, don't let the food overwhelm you.

Take control of your food choices or you'll make poor dietary decisions.



Know How To Read A Nutrition Label

When it comes time to lose weight, many people look to the nearby fitness center to help them shed those extra pounds.

When entering a gym for the first time, newcomers are often overwhelmed by the buzz of activity and the clanking of weights coupled with the host of machines they seem to know nothing about.

While an initial foray into the gym can be intimidating, it's important to keep in mind that one of the best ways to lose weight is something you've been doing almost since the day you were born.

Since the moment you took your first step, you've been doing cardio, or cardiovascular exercise.

More widely referred to as aerobic exercise, cardio has a number of benefits, not the least of which is losing weight.

Cardio strengthens bones. Osteoporosis is a bone disease in which the bones become brittle and fragile due to tissue loss.

This tissue loss can be the result of age or deficiencies in calcium or vitamin D. A workout that includes jogging or even fast walking can reduce the risk of osteoporosis because, as the National Osteoporosis Foundation (NOF) points out, these weight-bearing activities strengthen the skeletal system.

NOF also notes that any exercise in which feet or legs are bearing the weight, including dancing and climbing, are effective cardio exercises.

Cardio reduces body fat. Including cardio in your regular exercise routine helps to increase lean body tissue while reducing fat.

If the goal of your weight loss is to look better, then including cardio in your regular routine is a great way to achieve this.

While this might sound simple, the more calories you burn, the more pounds you'll lose, and cardio has proven to be a great way to burn calories.

Cardio can reduce blood pres-

sure. Many people choose to lose weight not because of a New Year's resolution, but because their doctor (or their body) has told them they need to shed weight to survive.

For those with high blood pressure, cardio has proven an effective way to lower blood pressure.

A 2002 study at Tulane University found that aerobic, or cardiovascular, exercise lowered blood pressure in all groups of people, whether they had pre-existing conditions or had normal blood pressure.

Cardio can help relieve the pain of arthritis. A cardiovascular program that includes water exercise can be especially valuable to arthritis sufferers.

Such exercise can help keep the joints moving while strengthening the muscles around the joints.

In addition, cardiovascular exercise increases energy levels, which helps arthritis sufferers better handle some of the daily tasks that have become difficult as a result of the arthritis.

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Did You Know?

Investigation into a fungus purported to cause some cases of dandruff, eczema and other skin disorders could make treatment easier for millions of people. Research indicates that dandruff can affect up to 90 percent of the population.

A team of researchers at Proctor & Gamble Beauty said that they grew enough of the *Malassezia globosa* fungus, to give dandruff to 10 million people.

This fungus has been known to cause dandruff among other skin conditions.

They subsequently sequenced its genes and found that the fungus is able to sexually reproduce.

This information can shed light on how to treat dandruff. Fungus reproduction could be the catalyst for dandruff to eventually find ways to evade dandruff shampoos.

Malassezia fungi also cause systemic infections in newborns, and are related to some fungi that affect plants such as corn.

So finding ways to outsmart the fungus could have widespread benefits for health and agriculture.