

[IMAGE]

4 Ways to Help Keep the Holiday Pounds Off

By Editorial Staff

Thanksgiving is here and a full array of end-of-season holidays are right around the corner, promising a month or more of cheer, good will toward all ... and plenty of opportunity for gorging. For every teen who gains the "freshman 5" pounds their first year of college, millions more people of all ages gain the "holiday 5" or more as the year comes to a close. Here are five ways to help keep the holiday pounds off this year while still enjoying your favorite holiday foods:

1. Walk Away: Good advice for any eating situation, but particularly the variety featuring a near-endless array of choices and plenty of time to indulge, is to know when to walk away; when to tell yourself, "OK, I'm done." Too many people treat Thanksgiving, for example, as a day-long meal and find themselves packing on the pounds. Combined with abundant leftovers for days afterward and the fact that other big holiday celebrations await, you've got a recipe for weight disaster. Enjoy a good meal, try a few things you might not normally eat, but don't overdo it. Know when to walk away and return to your normal diet and exercise regimen, or before you know it, you'll be off the wagon and have to make weight loss your New Year's resolution.

Holiday Pounds - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark 2. *Walk It Off:* Walking is a fundamental form of fitness that doesn't require anything except a good pair of shoes and an open road / field / path. It's also a great way to facilitate digestion following a meal, particularly a filling one, and will burn calories in the process. In fact, walking in all forms – while shopping for holiday gifts, bonding with relatives / friends, etc. – can help fight holiday weight gain.

3. No Grazing Allowed: It might look like a buffet, but you don't have to treat the holiday meal like one. There's a difference between enjoying a variety of foods and heaping plate after plate with calorie- and fat-laden fare that's sure to weigh you down. Fill your plate, leave some room for dessert and a few "second tasters" of things you liked the first time around, but then call it a meal and move on. Just because the food's still on the table doesn't mean you're obligated to eat it. Think in terms of normal meals and you'll avoid endless grazing that adds up to an overstuffed belly and scale.

4. A Time of Sharing: If the holidays are about one thing, it's celebrating with friends, family and loved ones. In many cases, you have the opportunity to spend time with people you might not have seen all year or longer. That's the spirit of the holidays, not the food. So enjoy a good meal, to be sure, but spend most of your time enjoying the company of those who matter most and you'll enjoy a guilt-free, healthy holidays that keeps you in shape and ready to roll next year!

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