

[IMAGE]

4 Ways to Work Out (Not Skip Out) Over the Holidays

By Editorial Staff

As we warned last issue, the holiday season is here, and with the joy comes temptation, stress and every opportunity to fall off the health and fitness wagon. Exercise is an easy one to ignore over the holidays because it's often the endeavor people find the most difficult to do in the first place. After all, time is at a premium during the holidays, and with temperatures dropping, storm clouds overhead and a million-and-one things to do, slogging your way to the gym just doesn't seem all that appealing.

You might feel that way over the next six weeks, but don't let it derail your quest for lifelong health and wellness. Here are four ways to overcome the elements (meteorological and otherwise) and stick to your exercise routine through 2014 and into 2015:

1. *Rise and Shine*: The longer the day drags on and the fewer items you're able to cross off your daily To Do List, the harder it is to squeeze in exercise. The solution: Start your day with a quick, vigorous workout that energizes you (so you have more energy to complete the To Do List), but more importantly, let's you cross off one of your most important items: Find Time to Exercise.
2. *Prioritize*: Speaking of the To Do List, are the holidays really that much busier than any other time of year? Chances are you feel pretty busy / stressed all the time. And yet you've made it this far – so why quit now? what's more, research suggests exercise reduces stress levels, making it all the more important this time of year. So put it at the *top* of your To Do List and make sure it gets crossed off every day.
3. exercise - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark Partner Up: It's generally a good idea to recruit a workout partner to help motivate you; during the holiday season, it's essential. The reason? Having a partner makes it harder to skip a workout. Unless you're both into skipping (which probably means you should question your choice of a workout partner), it can make the difference – particularly on those days when a workout just doesn't seem in the cards – in whether you stick to your routine or not.
4. *Friendly Competition*: Looking to stay engaged with your exercise routine? Then challenge a friend, family member – or just yourself – and get excited to meet new goals. Dedicate yourself to breaking that 9-minute mile, doing five more push-ups than you're used to doing, or working toward another

fitness goal you've yet to achieve. Friendly competition can often be fierce; just what you need to stay engaged and enthusiastic through the new year.

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