

5 Steps to Get Back on the Diet Track After the Holidays



(HealthDay News) -- Even though successful dieters work harder than non-dieters at maintaining their weight over the holidays, they often face more weight gain than thinner people. And gaining weight often goes on for another month ... into the new year, according to the National Weight Control Registry.

But you can stop the scale from creeping further up and get back on track with renewed dedication starting now.

Diet slips are a normal part of any lifestyle change. Slips don't really hurt your progress over the long-term, but how you react to a slip can.

Negative thoughts are the most dangerous and can leave you feeling discouraged and down on yourself. Counter them with positive affirmations. Review the diet success you had before the holidays and return to your good eating habits without reprimanding yourself.

Don't let holiday overeating extend one day longer. That means get back on track with your very next meal -- not

tomorrow, next Monday or next month. This way, you can limit weight gain and not let it feed on itself.

Zero in on your food triggers so you can avoid them in the future. Sampling grandma's homemade stuffing at one meal isn't going to do much damage, but taking home leftovers to eat for days could. This kind of awareness will help you make better food decisions.

Renew your commitment to weight loss and healthy eating by decreasing calories and increasing exercise time for one full week. This can wipe out a typical 1-to-2 pound holiday gain.

Go back to carefully planning out every meal -- and snack -- in your digital or paper journal, emphasizing vegetables, fruit, lean protein and whole grains.

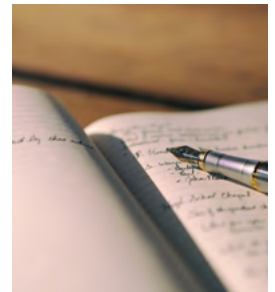
These steps will keep a lapse from turning into a relapse and a more significant weight gain.

More information: If you need a reboot of healthy food practices, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has tips for improving your eating habits. https://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/losing_weight/eating_habits.html

-- Julie Davis

SOURCE: American Academy of Dermatology, news release, May 2018

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Another Weight Loss Tip: A Quick Fridge and Pantry Remodel



(HealthDay News) -- Eating healthier requires a mindset change. But it also helps to make changes in your home environment to encourage a new and better way of approaching food -- starting in the kitchen.

First, do a deep dive into your fridge. You want to rearrange shelves and drawers to make healthier foods easier to find. This is also a great time to purge both outdated items and foods that just aren't good for you.

Use drawers for high-calorie foods that you must keep but don't need to see. Then move veggies and fruits to eye level so that every time you open the fridge to look for something to eat, that's what you'll see first. **Hint:** Prep your veggies and fruits before refrigerating them so you won't first have to clean and cut them when you want a snack.

Nuts and seeds are loaded with taste and nutrients, but they're also high in calories. Make your own mixes, then measure out 1-ounce servings and package them in baggies or wax paper bundles. Store in the fridge to keep them fresher.

Always have a pitcher of D.I.Y. flavored water in the fridge to answer the urge for a soda. Experiment with citrus, watermelon or cucumber slices, crushed berries, mint or other herbs to see what tastes best to you.

Stock your pantry with a selection of oils and a variety of flavored vinegars to make your own salad dressings and marinades. **Tip:** Delicate oils, like those made from nuts, will last longer in the fridge. Other oils need a cool, dark cabinet -- light is the enemy so don't leave them out on your counter top.



Fill all your salt shakers with no-salt spice blends instead. These add variety to simple tomato sauces and whole grain pastas as well as steamed veggies.

It should only take an hour or so to do this kitchen "remodel," but the results can translate to a lifetime of better health.

More information: The Cleveland Clinic has 10 tips for stocking your fridge for weight loss. <https://health.clevelandclinic.org/10-ways-to-stock-your-fridge-for-weight-loss/>

– Len Canter

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Health Tip: It's Never Too Late to Exercise

(HealthDay News) -- If you are middle aged and out of shape, it isn't too late to get active and improve your health, the American Heart Association says.

A study in the journal *Circulation* showed that heart stiffness -- a potential precursor to heart failure -- decreased for middle-aged men who engaged in two years of the right kinds and amount of exercise.

Study participants who did high- and moderate-intensity exercise up to five times weekly had better heart elasticity and improved the way in which their bodies used oxygen, the research found.

The Heart Association recommends weekly exercise that should include:

- One high-intensity workout, such as an aerobic interval workout that boosts the heart rate for four minutes at a time in several spurts during the session.
- An hour-long moderate-intensity workout doing something you find fun, such as tennis, biking or walking.
- Two or three moderate workouts per week that might make you sweat, but still allow you to talk with someone.
- A strength training session.



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