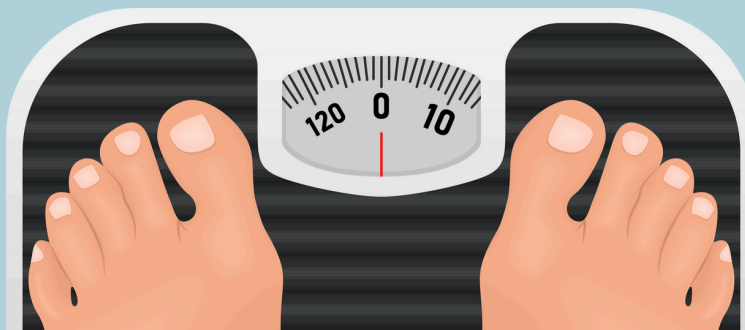




Welcome to **HOLD THE** Holidays!

Challenge Overview: Participants weigh-in with their pre-Thanksgiving weight and sign a contract stating that they will practice healthy diet and exercise habits over the holidays. Participants commit to entering the New Year weighing less, the same, or within two pounds of their initial weight. Weigh-ins are then conducted on a weekly basis. Participants receive weekly emails packed with educational tips centered around weekly themes.

This 4-week (or 6-week) challenge will keep participants motivated to workout, eat right and manage stress throughout the shorter days, colder weather and increased business of the holiday season.





Weekly Weigh-in:

Week 1:

Reach for this, not that: 8 Healthy Holiday Food Swaps, Tips on Preparing Healthy Holiday Meals

Turkey, stuffing and pie, oh my! The average American gains one to two lbs. between Thanksgiving and New Year's. This may not seem significant at first, but after just five years, you could see ten extra pounds on the scale. You can avoid the extra calories, sugar, salt and weight gain by trying some of these healthy alternatives. If you are doing the cooking, you may want to test the recipes and alternatives ahead of time, so don't have any surprises during your holiday celebration.

1. When the recipe calls for sour cream, you may automatically reach for the full fat sour cream at the grocery store, but instead, **try low-fat plain Greek yogurt.**
2. **Instead of candied yams, try roasting sweet potatoes with olive oil.** Not only is it less calories, but you will also get more vitamins and nutrients as well as monounsaturated fats from the olive oil.
3. **Serve up white turkey breast over the dark meat and avoid the skin.** This will save you extra calories.
4. **Skip store bought stuffing with your own homemade recipe.** Simply sauté celery and onions and other cubed vegetables of your choosing (from carrots to water chestnuts) in 1 to 2 tablespoons of olive or canola oil. Combine the mixture with cubes of whole-grain bread, moisten with no- or low-sodium chicken broth, and add your favorite herbs before baking.
5. **Replace canned cranberry sauce with cranberry relish or cranberry chutney.** When making your own cranberry dish, reduce the sugar the recipe calls for by $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{3}$, as most recipes call for more sugar than needed.
6. **Instead of the green bean casserole, try simply steaming your green beans and adding slivered almonds on top.** You will avoid the full fat sour cream or cream-based soups that often go into the traditional recipe as well as the unhealthy French-fried onions.
7. **Purchase or make whole grain rolls instead of white flour rolls.** Better yet, skip the rolls all together since holiday meals tend to be carbohydrate heavy.
8. **Choose pumpkin pie over the pecan pie.** You'll be eating closer to 300 calories instead of 500, while adding in vitamin A, calcium and iron from the pumpkin.





Weekly Weigh-in:

Week 2:

Holiday party survival guide: how to eat and drink wisely at your next holiday party.

The holiday season tends to include plenty of mixers and parties. According to the Calorie Control Council, the average number of calories eaten at a holiday dinner is a shocking 3,000, and that doesn't count pre-dinner snacking. Before you head out to your next event, check out some of these ideas on what to reach for and what to avoid on the appetizer table:

1. **Fill up on veggies first.** Chances are you will eat the most of what you reach for first. So, your first stop at the food buffet should be veggie based. Spring for the hummus dip over the cream-based dips.
2. **Choose a small plate over a large plate.** You will consume less calories overall and smaller portions if you choose a small plate at your next party.
3. **Fill up halfway.** Remember that a wine glass is generally 10 oz., so be sure to only fill up your glass half full to avoid the extra calories and stick with a 5 oz. glass of wine or forget the wine all together.
4. **Eat smaller bites, eat slowly and chew your food.** Studies show you can consume 30% fewer calories by taking your time and taking small bites and sips.
5. **You don't have to desert your desert.** You don't need to avoid the dessert table all together but choose to only eat a few bites of dessert instead of grabbing multiple desserts. Chances are that once you take a few bites, you will fulfil your craving without feeling like you are depriving yourself. It's all about portion control and moderation.





Weekly Weigh-in:

Week 3:

Raise a glass to your health: Best holiday beverages to enjoy and what to avoid.

From your favorite coffee shop's pumpkin spiced lattes to home-made hot toddies, the holidays offer up many high calorie drinks and it's easy to over-indulge. We may try to avoid over-eating, but we often forget about over-drinking. Try these fun drink alternatives instead.

1. **Wine Spritzer.** Instead of reaching for a 5 oz. glass of wine, try reducing the wine and adding 2 oz. of club soda instead for a wine spritzer.
2. **Apple cider.** Skip the eggnog and reach for apple cider. You can save 100 to 150 calories. You can always water it down a bit as well to reduce sugar and calories.
3. **Healthier holiday lattes.** When ordering your favorite holiday latte such as a pumpkin spiced latte or peppermint mocha from Starbucks or your favorite coffee shop, you may want to consider opting for non-fat milk, no whip and only 1 pump of the flavored syrups versus the traditional whole or two percent standard that is often served up with whip and many pumps of chocolate or flavored syrups.
4. **Chai tea lattes.** Chai is spiced tea made with traditional Indian seasonings. The tea is rich in antioxidants, has less caffeine than coffee, and many of the herbs and spices in chai (including cinnamon, cardamom, ginger, cloves and black pepper) have many health benefits. Add low fat milk (or almond milk) and a bit of stevia. Chai tea lattes from your local coffee shop can pack in extra fat, calories and sugar.
5. **Winter teas.** As noted above, teas have less caffeine than coffee and many health benefits. Herbal teas are naturally caffeine free. Warm up with your favorite winter tea. Licorice tea can help a sore throat, teas with ginger can aid in digestion. Holy basil or tulsi t
6. **Water, water, water.** More than anything you will want to reach for extra water during the winter months. Water helps to flush out toxins and carry nutrients to cells. Aim to drink half of your body weight in ounces each day. For example, a 200 lb. man should drink 100 oz. of water each day if he's not doing anything strenuous.



Chai Tea Latte Recipe:

1 bag of chai tea, 8 oz. of milk, stevia to sweeten as needed.
Pour 8 oz. of nonfat milk or almond milk into a mug, microwave for 60 seconds, steep your chai tea and add in stevia as needed.



Weekly Weigh-in:

Week 4:

6 ways to heat up your holiday workouts: Creative ways to fit exercise in during the holidays

The holiday season often means extra stress along with the hustle and bustle, so don't forget to take time for yourself. You can burn off those extra holiday calories and reduce stress with exercise. From an express workout session you can do in ten minutes, to ugly sweater runs, check out some of the fun ways to fit in exercise during the holiday season.

1. Sign up and train for a fun holiday run. Maybe it's an ugly sweater 5k or reindeer run. What local events are happening by you? Pick an event and train for it with friends or family. A 150 lb. person can burn about 228 calories if running a 10 min mile throughout a 5k.

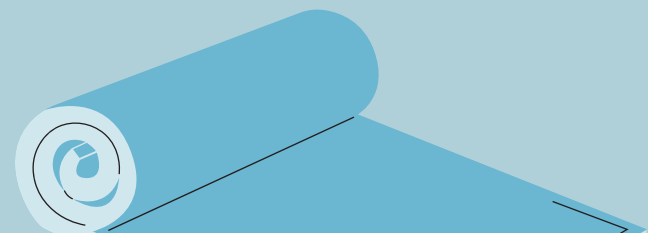
2. Play with your kids. Sledding, ice skating, even a friendly snowball fight will all add up to extra activity, fresh air and family bonding. Plan a few fun activities on Saturday and Sundays when you have a little more time to spare.

3. Winter group exercise classes. Try a new fitness class at the gym such as winter sports conditioning class. Check out what group fitness classes are happening at your local gym. New fitness classes will help you to bust through a fitness plateau by challenging your muscles in new ways. Plus, it can be a fun social environment, and this can increase your motivation throughout the cold, dark winter months.

4. Cross country skiing is one of the best forms of exercise. You can burn up to 800 calories an hour when cross country skiing vigorously. Snowshoeing is also a fun and effective form of exercise. If you haven't tried these activities, give them a while this winter. You can always rent this gear as well.

5. Hot yoga. Heat up your winter workout with a warm or hot yoga class. Hot yoga can help to detox your body through sweating, increase your flexibility and mobility as you stretch, and hold poses in the heated room that is generally between 90 and 100 degrees. You can also decrease anxiety through your breath and focus throughout the class. If hot yoga is not your style, try a traditional yoga class during the cold months. It can help to decrease anxiety and depression while strengthening and stretching your muscles.

6. Express workouts. If you are really limited on time, try HIIT (high intensity interval training). Think short and intense bursts followed by an active recovery. You can do this at home or at the gym. It could look like this: 50 ab crunches, 30 push-ups, 20 jumping lunges, 10 triceps dips, 30 second burpees. Perform each exercise with 30 seconds of rest in-between.





Weekly Weigh-in:

Week 5:

Stay Fit Indoors: How to Get a Workout in When It's Cold Outside

When winter hits and the days get chilly, stepping outside for a workout can feel less than appealing. But there's good news: you don't have to leave the warmth of your home to stay active. Here are some simple yet effective ways to get a solid workout indoors when it's too cold to venture out.

1. Embrace Bodyweight Exercises. Bodyweight exercises are fantastic for building strength and improving endurance without any equipment. Try incorporating moves like push-ups, squats, lunges, and planks into your routine. Not only are these exercises effective, but they also offer flexibility—allowing you to work out in a small space or even between activities.

Quick Routine Idea:

- 10 Push-ups
- 15 Squats
- 20 Lunges (10 per leg)
- 30-second Plank
- Repeat 3–4 times for a full-body workout.



2. Try HIIT for Maximum Efficiency. High-Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) involves short bursts of intense activity followed by brief rest periods, making it ideal for an efficient indoor workout. A 15–20 minute HIIT session can get your heart rate up and burn major calories, without needing much space or time.

Sample HIIT Workout:

- 30 seconds of jumping jacks
- 30 seconds of high knees
- 30 seconds of mountain climbers
- Rest for 30 seconds
- Repeat for 3–4 rounds.

3. Use Everyday Household Items. Who says you need dumbbells to lift weights? Grab a pair of water bottles, cans, or books to use as resistance for exercises like bicep curls, shoulder presses, or weighted squats. This is a fun way to stay creative with your workouts without needing any fancy equipment.

4. Yoga and Stretching for Flexibility and Relaxation. If you're looking for something lower-impact, yoga or stretching can be a perfect fit. A 20-minute yoga flow can boost flexibility, reduce stress, and improve balance. You don't need much space or any gear; a mat or towel will do the trick.

5. Follow an Online Class or Tutorial. For guidance, join an online workout class. Whether it's a YouTube video or an app with pre-recorded sessions, following along with an instructor can keep you motivated and ensure you're moving safely. Check out YouTube for tons of free workout videos.



Weekly Weigh-in:

Week 6:

Stay Fit Indoors: How to Get a Workout in When It's Cold Outside

The holidays are meant to be a joyful time, yet the pressure of planning, family obligations, and the hustle of year-end responsibilities can sometimes overshadow the joy with stress. Stress during this season can take a toll on our wellness—affecting sleep, mood, and even physical health. Here are some simple, effective ways to manage holiday stress and safeguard your wellness.

1. Set Realistic Expectations

One of the biggest stressors of the holidays is trying to make everything perfect. Whether it's hosting the ideal gathering or finding the perfect gift, the pressure can lead to burnout. Instead, set realistic expectations for yourself and your plans. Remember that the holidays are about connection, not perfection. Embrace imperfection, and let go of any pressure to do it all.

2. Prioritize Self-Care

During the holiday rush, self-care is often the first thing to go, but it's also the most important. Make time each day for small moments of self-care. Whether it's reading, meditating, going for a short walk, or simply taking deep breaths, carving out this time can help you recharge and reduce stress levels. Setting aside "me-time" helps keep your energy balanced for everything else.

3. Focus on Mindful Eating and Movement

The holiday season often includes big meals and tasty treats, which can be a wonderful tradition. Try to enjoy food mindfully, savoring every bite without guilt. Balance indulgence with nutritious meals and stay active—whether it's a short yoga session or a quick walk outside. Both mindful eating and regular movement can help keep your body and mind feeling strong.

4. Set Boundaries with Time and Finances

Holiday commitments can quickly become overwhelming. Practice saying "no" to events, gatherings, or even extra work that could overextend your time or resources. Sticking to a budget and making time for rest are both forms of healthy boundaries that can reduce financial strain and help you enjoy the season without burnout.

5. Embrace Gratitude and Enjoy the Moment

Reflect on the aspects of the season that bring you joy, and try to focus on these moments. Expressing gratitude, whether in a journal or in small daily moments, can shift your focus away from stressors and toward positivity. It can also help keep your mind grounded, bringing a sense of peace amid the holiday bustle.