

## **Beat those Christmas eating blues** by Dan Roach

Well, summer is over and the days are shortening. For those of you who are watching your weight, you are now entering the danger zone! Autumn spills into winter and brings with it a lure to binge on all the traditional foods of Christmas and New Year. So, as your outdoor activity is likely to decline and your indoor activity likely to include lifting a lot of food and drink to your mouth, it is a period of the year when you will be in danger of piling on the pounds.

If you are on a weight loss plan, or are on the brink of needing one, then now is a great time to plan ahead. By being prepared for the diet battle of the festive season, it can be a battle you will win with comfort. I do not say ease, because nothing comes easily when it means resisting some of your favourite foods; especially at a time when those around you are overindulging.

So, what can you do to ensure you do not steadily put on weight during the autumn and then put your weight gain into overdrive Christmas to New Year?

### **Prepare for the upcoming Christmas excess!**

Put against the perspective of the whole year, keeping to a sensible diet throughout Christmas should not seem so difficult. Why should you change so drastically over a few short weeks? Is it not possible to maintain a good diet through the whole of the winter, without spoiling your Christmas? Of course it is.

Much of any potential weakness will come from habit, peer pressure, boredom and stress. All of those things can be dealt with comfortably by the 3 R's; routine, regular exercise and relaxation.

Too many people use the excuse, '...but, I don't have the time'. This is not a valid excuse as you can always make time to maintain good health. Exercise will help by keeping your mind and body active, while routine helps by ensuring that you plan successfully to ensure both diet and physical exercise can become integrated into your life.

Relaxation is just as important. Making sure you take time to let your mind unwind will ensure you keep your stress levels low. High stress usually leads to health issues, poor sleep patterns and can also lead to comfort eating and higher consumption of alcohol

## Top 5 tips on Christmas day

The average calorie intake on Christmas day is a whopping 13,000kcal! That's 6 and a half times the daily recommended intake for a woman. So remember you can have a good time without over indulging. Just because there is masses of food on the table doesn't mean you have to eat it all. Are those left-overs better in the bin or on your hips? Here are a few tips to avoiding that Christmas bulge!

1. Turkey is higher in protein and lower in fat than chicken... although not when covered in traditionally made gravy! Using granules when making the gravy rather than the fat of the meat will save you calories and reduce your saturated fat intake.
2. Vegetables without butter added and minimal salt whilst cooking are best. Try to limit yourself to those roast potatoes in goose fat too!
3. Nibbling is one of the main areas people slip up. Cheese, biscuits, crisps, chocolate, pastries are all saturated with fat so why not try some healthier snacks like a bowl of grapes or some nuts. Go for Cashew nuts over salted or dry roasted peanuts.
4. Try to limit your alcohol intake. There are nearly 200 kcal in a large glass of wine so try to alternate with soft drinks or water or try a white wine spritzer.
5. How about a walk after Christmas lunch. Light exercise will increase your metabolism, increase your energy levels and get you out of watching James Bond repeats!"