

Staying healthy through a cookie-filled season

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Just because Santa's belly moves like a bowl of jelly doesn't mean yours has to this holiday season. Staying on track with your fitness program, even while traveling, will give you extra energy and start you out right for a healthful new year.

“Whether you're at home for the [holidays](#) or traveling it is important to stay on your path to fitness during the holidays. Maintaining your workout routine will help you resist overindulging at holiday meals and parties,” said Kara Smith, fitness trainer and special programs coordinator at the Loyola Center for Fitness.

Here are a few helpful tips:

- Pack healthy snacks such as trail mix, apples and oranges. This will not only save you calories, but money as well.
- When packing, include a small Thera-Band or resistance tubing so you can perform your favorite strength-training exercises when not at the gym.
- Consider purchasing a new fitness DVD for your trip. It's always fun to try something new.
- Get the whole family involved in a fitness activity. A pickup football game, family walk or building a snowman are all great ways to get in some exercise while enjoying holiday fun.

- If staying at a hotel , check whether it has a fitness center. If so, bring exercise clothes and take advantage of it.
 - If traveling by car, plan for frequent stops to walk and stretch. During the breaks make circles with your shoulders and wrists to encourage blood flow in your arms.
 - Eating a sensible meal before going to a holiday party will help you resist temptation.
 - Limit yourself to one trip to the buffet table and don't overload your plate.
 - Decide ahead of time what specific foods mean the most to you during the holidays. Enjoy a small portion of those and skip the other high-calorie and high-fat foods.
 - Sit down to eat your meal at a party. Taking the time to sit down will help you recognize when you are starting to feel full.
- “You can still enjoy the holidays without wrecking your [fitness](#) plan. The holidays are about spending time together. So enjoy the conversation and company and limit the cookies,” Smith said.

Provided by Loyola University Health System

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