

How to stay slim this holiday season

November 18 2014, by Kathleen Haughney



Holiday parties starting to fill up your weeknights? Weekends with turkeys, cookies and festive cocktails on the agenda?

With the holidays nearly upon us, you might be looking for ways to stick to your diet or stop yourself from putting on a few pounds during this busy time of year. Or, you might want to just keep your [stress levels](#) in check while planning for and entertaining visiting [family members](#).

Florida State University's Department of Food, Nutrition and Exercise Science faculty members have some easy advice for those hoping to stay slim and stress free during the holiday season.

One easy thing to remember is you just need to move.

"During the holidays, it can get extremely busy and stressful, good and bad stress, and we tend to overindulge so it is important to keep active," Associate Professor Lynn Panton said. "If you know you have evening engagements try exercising or walking in the morning or take a break during the day or during the lunch hour to walk and get outside if the weather is nice. Exercise can help expend extra calories that you may be taking in but more importantly it helps to reduce stress and increases energy."

But, how much you need to move also depends on your overall goals.

A 30-minute walk or easy bike ride is indeed a great way to keep active and reduce [stress](#), said Assistant Professor Mike Ormsbee. But, it doesn't cancel out a huge meal with several pieces of pumpkin pie at the end.

If the holidays hit while you're trying to stick to a weight loss plan or you're training for a race or competition, be smart about your time.

"There are no shortcuts," Ormsbee said. "When you only have 30 minutes to squeeze in a workout, aim for either high-intensity interval training or resistance training. This might include running fast for one minute, followed by two minutes of walking that you repeat 10-15 times or lifting weights to get stronger. These exercises have been shown to improve metabolism, fat loss and muscle gain."

Provided by Florida State University

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