



BalanceWorks® Newsletter

November 2015 | Written by the work/life experts at eni



Healthy Holiday Habits

November marks the beginning of the joyous "holiday season". All the festivities do have a few negative side effects including lack of sleep, added stress, and holiday weight gain. The good news is that there are some tips and tricks you can utilize from Thanksgiving all the way through New Year's Day to keep you fit and full of energy!

Quality Shut Eye

Stick to your normal sleep schedule as much as possible. Even after attending a late night holiday party, try your best to wake up at the same time you normally do to preserve your regular sleep-wake cycle. If you are extremely tired, it's better to grab a quick mid-day nap than to "sleep-in".

Avoid eating 2 hours before bedtime. If you are starving before bed, avoid eating that leftover pumpkin pie or a spoonful of mashed potatoes. Instead reach for a light snack like fruit or granola.

Avoid caffeine and alcohol up to 4 hours before bedtime. Obviously, caffeine is a stimulant and will make it harder to fall asleep. Alcohol is a depressant, so although it may help you fall asleep initially, as soon as your body metabolizes the alcohol, it will disrupt your sleep and wake you up.

Your bedroom should be your sanctuary. Avoid the urge to decorate your bedroom with twinkle lights, a Menorah, or mini Christmas tree, as artificial light reduces your quality of sleep. Also, don't clutter your bedroom with wrapping paper, ribbons, or shopping lists. Leave the stress and many to-dos of the holiday season out of the bedroom, so it remains a calm and inviting atmosphere.

Reduce Stress

The holiday season is an extremely busy time. Don't feel obligated to attend every celebration you're invited to. Accepting all invitations may leave you exhausted and stressed. If you are feeling overwhelmed it's perfectly acceptable to politely decline.

Money is often a source of stress during the holidays. It helps to take a look at your budget at the start of the season and plan out exactly what you can afford in regards to gifts and hosting/contributing to holiday festivities. This will mitigate many unexpected expenses and will ensure you are not left in debt at the end of the season.

Leave time for yourself to de-stress. Pick something you enjoy that keeps you calm and centered and practice it for a few minutes every day. Try yoga, meditation, reading, taking a walk or cuddling with a pet.

For more information or support on staying healthy during the holiday season, contact the work/life experts at **BalanceWorks®** by calling:

1.800.327.2255

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treats like this **Sweet Potatoes-Pecan Casserole** courtesy of the Food Network:

Ingredients

Cooking spray
3 1/2 pounds sweet potatoes (about 5 medium), peeled and cut into 1-inch chunks
1/3 cup honey
1 large egg
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
1/8 teaspoon ground ginger
Kosher salt
1 tablespoon packed dark brown sugar
1/3 cup finely chopped pecans

Directions

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Mist an 8-inch square baking dish with cooking spray.

Bring a few inches of water to a boil in a pot with a large steamer basket in place. Put the sweet potatoes in the basket, cover and steam until tender, 20 to 25 minutes. Transfer the potatoes to a bowl and let cool slightly. Add the honey, egg, 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon, the nutmeg, ginger and 1/2 teaspoon salt; whip with an electric mixer until smooth. Spread the sweet potato mixture in the prepared baking dish.

Mix the brown sugar, pecans and the remaining 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon in a bowl; sprinkle over the potatoes. Bake until hot and beginning to brown around the edges, 40 to 45 minutes.

Per serving: Calories 160; Fat 4 g (Saturated 1 g); Cholesterol 25 mg; Sodium 180 mg; Carbohydrate 31 g; Fiber 3 g; Protein 3 g

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Anything that makes you happy and calms your nerves will work!

Avoid Holiday Weight Gain

Keep in mind that it takes 500 extra calories per day to gain 1 pound so use the following technique to balance out food intake and prevent weight gain. If you do overeat at one meal, simply go light at the next meal. For example, if you LOVE Thanksgiving dinner and want to indulge, just be sure to eat a light breakfast and lunch.

Holiday buffets can lead to overeating. To keep calories in check fill your plate with the foods you love and skip those that are just OK and be sure to include healthy choices like fruits and veggies on your plate.

Be sure to bring something healthy to potluck dinners or lunches. This ensures that you can indulge in your own healthy dish while taking smaller portions of less healthy options.

Don't overindulge in alcohol as it adds empty calories and lowers inhibitions often resulting in over-eating.

Remember that it's fine to eat holiday treats like cookies and pies, just eat a small portion. Eat just enough to savor the scrumptious taste!

Remember to drink lots of water so you don't mistake thirst for hunger.

Finally, you can always find smart swaps for classic holiday meals and