



Fitness Tricks and Treats

By Joe Stein, President



One should be afraid, very afraid. The time between now and Thanksgiving is as dangerous as walking through a haunted forest on your way to grandma's house with a basket of donuts. Every Halloween fitness trick has a beneficial treat.

Trick: Eat Breakfast Every Day

Treat: Having adequate calories at breakfast will increase your morning energy level and decrease your need to have a mega lunch or a calorie-laden snack beforehand. In a recent joint survey by the makers of Ensure nutritionals, The American Association of Working People and The Institute for Health and Productivity Management, 32% of American workers do not eat breakfast or lunch most days. Eighty-nine percent of them snack, with over 50% snacking primarily on chips, candy, cookies or donuts. A nutritional breakfast is worth getting up early for. It is a proven way to maintain a healthy weight.

Trick: Do Strength Training

Treat: Exercising with weights increases muscle tone. Muscles burn between 30 and 50 calories per pound per day...even when you are not exercising. This boost to your metabolic rate offsets the effect aging has on your body. Lifting weights increases your energy level, attenuates osteoporosis, reduces stress and helps improve balance.

Trick: Eat More Fruits and Vegetables

Treat: Numerous studies have shown eating a combined minimum of five servings of fruits and vegetables each day reduces the risk of cancer as well as other diseases. By consuming low calorie, high-fiber foods, you will be less likely to eat high fat, calorie dense foods.

Trick: Drink More Water

Treat: Drinking eight 8-ounce glasses of water will supply your body with its most important nutrient. Just as running your car with a quart less oil will impair its performance and possibly damage its engine, living in a body a quart down on water may have deleterious effects. An adequate supply of water or water-based fluids helps the digestion process by transporting nutrients and removing waste by-products. Improved hair and nail texture plus skin clarity are extra treats.

Trick: Do Cardiovascular Exercise Almost Every Day.

Treat: A 25-minute walk at 4 MPH, done five days per week will cause a weight loss of about a pound per month for an average person. In addition to preventing creeping weight gain, cardiovascular exercise has been proven effective at reducing cholesterol, decreasing blood pressure, elevating positive brain hormones and reducing the risk of diabetes and heart disease.

Trick: Practice Portion Control

Treat: One sure way to treat yourself to a healthy weight is to practice portion control. Even healthy foods can cause weight gain if consumed in large quantities. Read the nutritional label on prepared foods for information. When preparing a meal from scratch, become proficient at estimating serving sizes: A serving of meat, fish or poultry is about four ounces, the size of a deck of playing cards. A serving of milk or yogurt is a cup, about the size of your hand holding a tennis ball. Rice and pasta...half a cup, equal to a small fist. Too much of a good thing is...too much of a good thing, so be mindful of everything on your plate.

Now that you know some fitness tricks, this season of the witch does not have to be the start of inevitable weight gain, culminating in a post-New Year's Day depression.

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