



Pre-Holiday Planning *By Joe Stein, President*



I can't believe it: The L.L. Bean Christmas catalogue arrived in early October! Like the small tropical depression destined to become a tsunami, the whirlwind of the Holiday Season will soon be upon us. Will our ship of fitness and wellness sink in the storm of holiday hazards? To help navigate the currents of the upcoming season, the following strategies are offered so that you may plan ahead.

Maintenance Mode

The goal of your nutrition and fitness program during the holidays is to maintain your current condition: Cardio, strength, flexibility and weight. Now is *not* the time to consider losing weight or making strength and cardio gains. The upcoming time of year can be stressful, so fit in your cardio when you can. Two 15-minute fast walks are as effective as one 30-minute walk, but easier to fit into a busy schedule. Make every day events bonus cardio training...take the stairs; park car the car as far as you can from the store; walk around the mall an extra time.

Eating Out

Start dinner with a clear soup. Ask for light salad dressing on the side. Forget the breadbasket. If all of your dining companions agree, have it removed from the table. Don't be afraid to ask the waiter how something is prepared. This way you will avoid meaningless excess calories. Avoid those menu selections that scream shipwreck:

- With cheese
- In heavy cream sauce
- Fried
- In butter
- Death by chocolate

When your plate arrives, study it for a few seconds. If the portions look big, they probably are. Ask the waiter for another plate and set aside the excess potatoes, rice, meat, pasta, etc. All fruits and veggies can stay. The plate of extras you created will be a great lunch or dinner the next day and remind you of the fine time you had the evening before. Fresh berries, sorbet or a special coffee make a great ending to dinner.

Holiday Parties

For many of us, the real challenge is the Holiday Cocktail Party, rife with interesting hors d'oeuvres, sophisticated cocktails and gooey deserts. What's a good strategy to allow you to enjoy parties while keeping the calories in check? Eat lightly before the party, saving room for the special treats you crave. As for drinks, liquid calories are the stealthiest: alcohol contains

seven calories per gram. Protein and carbohydrates contain four. Only fat, with nine calories, contains more than alcohol. To avoid the judgment-altering impact of over drinking, mix hard spirits with club soda, alternating with only club soda. Try spritzers instead of white wine. Avoid sweet, creamy drinks that add an extra helping of calories. Most of all, know your limit and stay below it.

Stay Focused

Stay focused on enjoying those things that truly give you pleasure this upcoming holiday season. Build a calorie deficit so that you can indulge when it really counts. At a business lunch or non-occasion dinner, exercise some restraint. Just because you always eat candies at the movies, do you want to spend your precious holiday calorie budget on movie candy? If a co-worker brings donuts to work, do you feel compelled to have one? It's OK to eat some fatty or high calorie foods in moderation; just realize it is a special treat. Make every calorie count.

Enjoy the Season

Chart your course carefully this year so you may enjoy the things that bring the most joy over the next couple of months. Don't deny the pleasures of the season, as denial will create guilt, anxiety and resentment. Remember even if your wellness compass breaks or you should go overboard, forgive yourself, and get back into the lifeboat. New Year's Resolutions are our next port of call.

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