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THE FIT FACTOR

LIFESTYLE CHANGE

If you are trying to be aware of your calorie intake this Xmas, plan the days you can be good and make a huge effort on pulling back on empty calories where you can.

FITNESS TIP

The amount of extra calories usually consumed during the festive season means it's even more important to keep training and it will also help clear your body of unwanted toxins.

Don't miss David's tips every Saturday in your Journal

THE festive season and over-indulgence seem to go hand in hand. Maybe it's time to step back slightly and be aware of what you are eating and drinking and pull back where you can.

Here are some stats to make you think:

Even a small Christmas pudding requires nearly two hours of running to burn off the eye-watering 1,280 calories, while it would take 21 minutes of jogging to shift just one mince pie or five Roses chocolates.

A brisk 35-minute walk would be needed to shed one slice of Christmas cake, or a 12-minute stroll for a single Ferrero Rocher.

The ultimate shocker is a full turkey dinner with all the trimmings contains around 5,200 calories, which means it would take a run of over 45 miles to burn it off.

Of course you can be sensible without taking away any of the enjoyment of Christmas – here are a few tips to curb your calorie count:

Pick and choose

Choose the days you are potentially going to eat more and pull back on the days between.

A sensible breakfast

Skip the croissants and sugar-rich cereals at breakfast, instead look to have a protein-based breakfast such as eggs with smoked salmon.

Water

Keep your water levels up, this will keep you feeling fuller for longer and help you to avoid overeating.

Nibbles

Stay away from nibbles. It's too easy to sit and eat your way through a large amount without even registering how much you have eaten.

Cut down on carbs

Avoid overloading on starchy carbs by replacing roast spuds with parsnips or sweet potatoes.

Success is no more than a few simple disciplines practised everyday

Motivational quote of the day

Avoid buffet grazing

If you are at a party where there is a buffet, once you have selected your food, step away. When food is within easy reach, grazing is too easy and you will be eating unnecessary calories

Don't skip meals

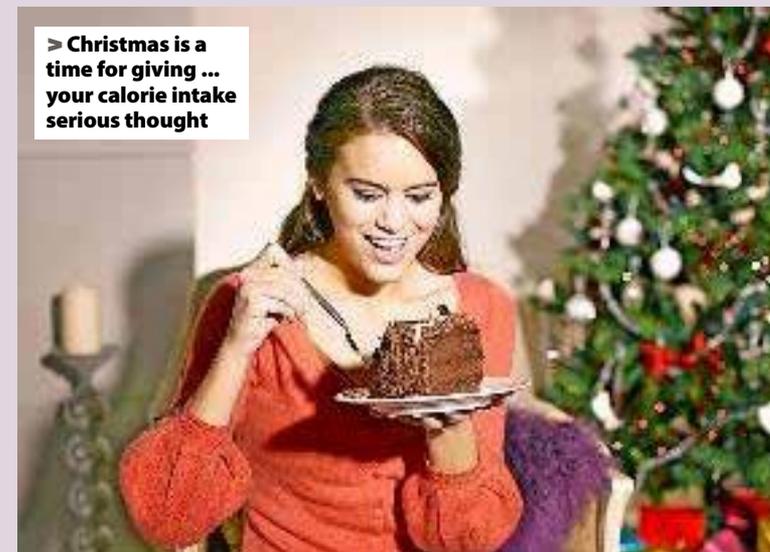
If you're going to a party straight after work, don't ditch lunch for fear of overdoing your daily calorie intake, you will end up extremely hungry and often eat way more than you would normally.

Clear the table

Dinner with family and friends often means spending longer sitting around the table. The longer you linger, the more likely you are to keep eating, even though you have had enough. Clear the table, therefore avoiding any further temptations.

Factor in the drinks

Alcohol is packed with empty calories. Research shows alcohol not only increases your appetite but can weaken your willpower, meaning you are even more likely to over-indulge on festive nibbles. Adding ice to alcoholic drinks will dilute them. Choosing lower-alcohol



> Christmas is a time for giving ... your calorie intake serious thought

drinks such as spritzers and slimline mixers will also cut the calorie count.

Be mindful

Don't lose touch with your appetite regulators, listen to your body and give it a chance to feel hungry before you eat. Try to eat slowly and

savour your food.

Treat sweets as treats

If you have a box of chocolates, avoid eating the whole lot at once. Put a small handful in a bowl and the rest out of sight. Making it an occasional treat means you'll enjoy it more.