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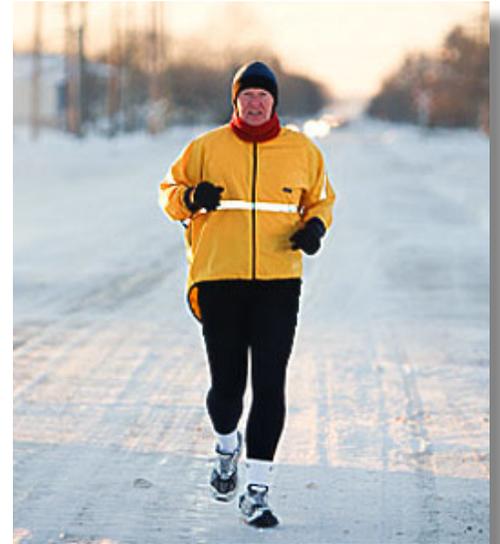
WELLNESS WEEKLY

Your Holiday Fitness Program

The holiday season can be enough to derail even the most dedicated exerciser. You're busy, you're stressed, it's chilly out ... so why not just take a break from your fitness program until the New Year? Slacking off on your fitness program during the holidays will only leave you with more pounds -- and more stress -- come New Year's. Fitness experts recognize that this time of year is difficult for many people trying to stick to an exercise program, so they have some suggestions to keep you motivated and disciplined.

Be Flexible and Mix It Up

- Be flexible when your days get busy. Instead of simply blowing off your 5 p.m. trip to the gym for an office party at the same time, wake up an hour early and walk or jog before work. Or fit a brisk walk into your lunch hour.
- Mix up your routine to avoid boredom. If you usually run four days a week, try running once, swimming once, and lifting weights twice. The novelty of the new exercise will hopefully be a stronger motivator than the 'need' to do something else during your normal exercise time.
- Combine exercising and family commitments. For example, hauling the kids up a hill a few times can make a sledding trip as beneficial as a jog. Taking the family snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, or on a backpacking trip will provide exercise as well as quality time with loved ones.
- Create a home workout routine for those times you can't make it to the gym. Crunches, push-ups, and many other exercises can be done without any gym equipment.
- Increase your time management skills over the holiday season. Organize your day the evening before. Prioritizing your tasks beforehand will help you find time to exercise. Each week, make it a priority to fit in three exercise sessions.
- Walking is an exercise that can go anywhere. Always have a pair of running or walking shoes and socks with you, if all else fails, you have the minimum equipment necessary to get in a walk.



If cold weather is derailing your fitness activities try these winter weather workout tips

- Lace up your skates. During the winter it's often too cold, too dark, or too slippery to walk or run outside. To get in a great workout, try ice skating.
- Try a new home routine. Bodyweight routines are exercises that need no equipment and can be done in your own home. There are many types of bodyweight routines, such as yoga, Pilates, and aerobics. Pop in a fitness DVD to get you going.
- Set up your own gym. Now's the time to think about getting a treadmill, elliptical machine, or stationary bike. Having your own equipment and knowing how to use it will keep you motivated and help you stay on track.

When all's said and done, it's important to be realistic. Give yourself a little slack during the holidays. It's a time to have fun and be with family and friends, and if you have a rigid attitude toward your diet and exercise, you may end up just giving up because you've set the standard too high.

Remember, even if you find yourself simply too bogged down to exercise at all during the holidays, that's no excuse to stay inactive once the season is over. If you do fall off the exercise wagon, there's no reason not to climb back aboard once your post-holiday routine is established.