

Health, Fitness and Exercise over Christmas and New Year....

Can it be done? Of course, as long as you're a little careful and don't just go for the big blowout! Here are a few tips to try and ensure a good time over the festive period, and that your clothes still fit in the new year.

1: Don't pig out: you're reading this in the middle of the holiday period, when there is always the temptation to eat extra 'because it's there'. Already eaten half the tin of chocolates? – you probably wouldn't do it during any other break, so keep the treats out of sight, because that's what they are – treats. Try to avoid piling your plate high, and stick with your normal quantities of food – remember that vegetables and lower fat options are just as nice, so concentrate on enjoying the food rather than enjoying the quantity,

2: Think about quantity: The normal calorie intake for males and females is likely to be more than catered for by a 'standard' turkey Christmas lunch, so bear in mind that sitting in front of 'The Great Escape' on television is unlikely to burn all the excess energy: you don't have to give up on the trad food if you like it, just bear in mind that the rest of the day can involve activities other than eating.

3: Keep it regular: eating a small amount on a regular basis will help your body to cope better with the energy demands – this means that your body will burn calories as it needs them rather than trying to conserve energy and then eating large amounts of fatty 'quick fix' foods at a party. Breakfast and a good balance of carbs, fats, fibre, liquid (...!) and proteins will keep your body ticking over happily. This doesn't of course mean loitering beside the buffet – that'll just ensure you eat constantly!

4: Keep hydrated: not only is water essential, but it's also important to ensure that your liquid intake contains an appropriate balance of alcohol and other drinks. Remember water helps regulate temperature, blood pressure and ensures efficient digestion (as well as helping stave off the effects of hangovers). Watch the units of alcohol: a bottle of red or white wine has nearly 500 calories in it, and a pint of premium lager has around 335: this may need more than a little exercise to recover from....

And finally **5: Exercise:** You should exercise, so why stop over the break – there are still a few days to ensure that the New Year's resolution is achievable.

As ever: if you don't normally exercise (or haven't exercised for a while), or have any medical conditions which might cause problems, check with your Doctor to ensure it's safe to increase your activity levels. New Year's Resolutions should help, not hurt....

Happy New Year!

Alan Clinch