

Surviving the Holidays
By Tonya M. Jones, M.Ed., Founder of Freedom Consulting

Seven days before Christmas 2006, I joined Weight Watchers. When I weighed in at 199.6 lbs and 39% body fat, which classified me as obese the staff said, “Wow, you are joining us during the holiday season. Most people wait until the New Year.” Health and Fitness became a priority to me during the holiday season. Therefore, I implemented strategies into my life that would empower me to overcome food temptations that naturally occur during holidays. I use these strategies throughout the entire year, but they are especially helpful during the Christmas season.

- Tip 1
Understand any one holiday is just one day and at midnight the holiday will be over.
- Change the focus from food to fellowship. Oftentimes during the holiday we see relatives and friends that we do not frequently spend quality time. Consider scaling back the menu and increasing the focus on a warm atmosphere that encourages conversation and sharing instead of giving into your sweet tooth.
- Identify your triggers for emotional eating and develop a plan that empowers you. For instance, follow the recipe that is the healthier version of your favorite desert and bring to the holiday dinner already packaged in the proper portion size (read the food label).
- Create a new tradition by planning a family walk prior to eating your meal. Exercising before eating is more effective before eating because you boost your metabolism, which will help burn calories while you are eating.
- Schedule a spa appointment during the holidays as a gift to yourself. Facials, massages, manicures, and pedicures are a great stress reducer that will help to manage any emotional holiday blues and stress that naturally occurs.

Happy Holidays!

Tonya M. Jones, M.Ed.

Disclaimer: Please consult your physician before starting any weight loss or fitness program.