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As we approach the festive season, one large issue continually appears...how to cope with the incredible mound of delectable treats that will infest our homes, workplaces, and nearly every social occasion in which we find ourselves. There are a few top tips for avoiding those extra pounds that will spell New Year's agony.

1. Avoid going out with an empty stomach. If you are hungry, your resistance will be that much lower. Munch on a handful of nuts or other protein snacks immediately before your arrival to dull your appetite especially if it is going to be a party with lots of snacks lying around.

2. Go for the high protein foods over the sugary ones. These satisfy hunger longer than carbohydrates. If smoked salmon is on offer, go for that rather than bread or crisps. Carbohydrates turn to sugar and make you crave more.

3. Consume high fibre foods. They will give you bulk and keep you from being tempted by the sweets that will turn to fat and ruin your hard work. Vegetables, fresh and dried fruit, nuts, seeds, lentils, and beans are examples of food with high fibre content.

4. Eat slowly and chew thoroughly. Stuffing food away prevents you from recognising that you've had enough. Give your stomach an opportunity to tell you that you aren't hungry any more. You might need a lot less food to feel satisfied than you think.

5. Don't hang around near the food. Putting some distance between you and the buffet creates a convenient obstacle between you and calories. If the food is in the kitchen, socialise in the lounge. Chances are if you are standing where the goodies are, you will unconsciously reach for them.

6. Fill up on liquids. Water, tea, and juice will take up space and fill you up, lessening the desire for more food.

7. Try to avoid eating just because others around you are. If you aren't really hungry, nibble on a healthy snack. It may sound obvious, but you don't have to eat just because the food is in front of you (unless you are genuinely hungry of course)

8. Save the treats for those really special moments. Only eat those festive delights that are special and that you will treasure. If your favourite part of the holidays is eating a mince pie, then go for it. But perhaps let the Christmas pudding that you are rather indifferent about pass you by.



9. Exercise where possible. Whilst you may be ultra busy over the holidays, try to fit in some time to get your body moving. This will help you to reconnect with yourself and keep you motivated to feel good. If nothing else, it will at least burn off some of the unwanted calories consumed.

10. Remember Your Goals. Take time each day to remember the person that you want to be. Focusing on what you want out of life will help you to do what it takes to get there. If you have recently lost weight and are fearful that the holidays are going to ruin all of your hard work, then think about how much fitter and healthier you feel now.

Finally, if you managed to break all 10 rules, use your 'get out of jail free card':

Let Guilt Go. If you do have a night of binging, don't let it get you down. Many people have one night of indulgence and then think "I messed up once, I've ruined all of my progress and I may as well give up." If your halo slips, get up the next day, get over the guilt, get over the self doubt and judgment, and get back on the route you want to go. Beating yourself up is never going to help you achieve your goals. Focus on the future rather than the past.