

How to Get Through the Holidays without Falling off the Rails

by Becky Sampson

5 Key Elements to Getting through the Holidays

Holidays can be a time when people tend to check out from their efforts to be healthy, often telling themselves, 'I'll just wait till the first of the year to get started.' The fact is that the average person gains 7-10 lbs over the holidays and sometimes that weight is the hardest to get off. It's a slippery slope to disaster and full blown discouragement. It's not uncommon for people to feel a lot of different emotions during this time of year due to family get togethers, social pressures and the hustle bustle of the season. Why not do something different this year so that you don't fall prey to the usual guilty pleasures. Come out on top when it's all over. You'll feel so much better about yourself. Here are my 5 Key Elements for getting through the Holidays without going off the rails.

1. PLAN AHEAD

Planning can sometimes be a bit overwhelming for people in general but let me tell you, it's by far one of the best daily practices you can implement in order to not fall into the trap of stuffing yourself to oblivion which then leads to you feeling horrible about yourself and discouragement which is not a place you want to be. Yes, there is always the first of the year to start, but I encourage you to be more conscious in this holiday season. When going to family get togethers, company parties and other holiday events, just know that most likely they will have tempting foods that in the past you might have let loose on but this year, make sure you don't attend these events on an empty stomach. It's much easier to say no when your stomach is full than try white knuckling it on your own when the food is calling out your name. Take foods with you that are healthy for you to munch on, ask ahead of time, people organizing the event what will be served, drink plenty of water and keep a positive attitude. Many times when you are hungry you are more likely thirsty. Avoid idol time or long period of times in environments that might be triggers for you.

2. ANTICIPATE TRIGGERS

Holidays can have incredible triggers for many people not only when it comes to food but emotions. Many times people will tell me they are emotional eaters and from my years of working with people I have seen the patterns of emotional eating which have lead to overeating. If you don't know what triggers are they can be as simple as a situation, person, something said or can even be a smell that reminds you of a past memory. Many people who struggle with unhealthy eating aren't conscious that when they turn to food it's usually an emotional hunger they are reacting to not a physical hunger. In my course, I am launching in January, I will be teaching people how to respond to triggers and the tools I have used over all these years to stay out of the food when those triggers come and how to stay on track when it comes to making healthy choices.



3. WHO YOU GONNA CALL?

Have a few names of people who you can reach out to that will support you in making wise choices when you are in a bind. This has been invaluable for me when I find myself in a situation I want to eat unhealthy. I get it can be hard to want to reach out but your willingness to do so will incredibly help you resist the many temptations out there. It's hard to ask for help and at the same time asking can be a powerful tool if you choose your support well. May I suggest, not choosing people who are too close to you in your personal life. That can get a bit messy at times but friends who believe in you and that will support you in making good choices.

4. BE DECISIVE

Make a commitment to yourself that caring for yourself both emotionally and physically is a priority to you through these holidays. There are all kinds of things that come up and in my experience, if I don't make up my mind before hand what my boundaries are, I will let anything slide right in and be ok with it until I find myself beating myself up over eating things that set me back. Make a list of things you are committed to doing or not doing during this holiday season and keep it with you where you can refer to it often. For me, I don't eat sugar and flour so I have already made up my mind so when sugar and flour are in front of me, it's easy to say no. It really is that simple.

5. DON'T GET DISCOURAGED

As I like to say, "When you slip up, Step Up!" You are not going to be perfect right out of the gate. The important part is not to beat yourself up. Stay committed to what you say you are going to do and if you have a bad day, shake it off and step up. Most people allow a bad day or a bad meal to throw them off course and it doesn't have to work like that. I personally have to stay far away from those foods that cause me to go off the rails. I focus more on connecting with people than what my next binge food will be, in this way, I feel successful. Everyone I have ever worked with knows me well enough to know that I will never put shame on them for falling off the wagon but rather I encourage them to get right back up and keep going. Momentum will be your best friend so yes, it's better to not give in but if you do, quickly pick yourself back up and keep going. As yourself often, 'What is best choice I can make right now for me?' or if you struggle with the concept of not eating something that you love, tell yourself 'I can eat anything I want, I just choose NOT to eat that right now.' It's not about depriving yourself, it's about changing the way you look at it and making better choices than you did before.