

### **Getting through December with your healthy lifestyle and Christmas cheer in tact!**

Christmas is a busy and really social time of year. It's hard to stick to any sort of routine when yours is so far out of the usual. People often have relatives coming from all over or planning to travel to them, work is finishing up and there are all those Christmas parties to get to. Not to mention Christmas shopping! How on earth can you keep your lifestyle active and avoid putting on extra kilos?

Well as the old saying goes – where there is a will there is a way!

Here are a few tips:

- For your own Christmas party – make it active. Go to a park, go for a walk, take a footy, a Frisbee, or even a cricket set. You'd be surprised how often people are happy to be active in a team sport at these events.
- Move your usual exercise time to the morning, so that you're able to get to all the Christmas parties that you have.
- Attend your Christmas parties around your regular routine. Often all you need to do is drop in and say G'day. If you turn up a little later (after your gym or sport session), the likelihood of being tempted by food that you normally wouldn't eat will be less and you can stick to your routine as well!
- Shopping can be physical activity – you walk for miles and miles! Wear your pedometer that day and see how far you go!
- Christmas is just one day! If I celebrate Christmas at all the parties I'm invited to, I'll end up putting on many, many kilos. Have one drink or one treat but not a hundred!

And on the food front:

- Eat to enjoy but not to excess. If you know you are going to a Christmas bash and you are likely to eat foods that are "of lesser nutritional value", try doing a bit more activity that day (even if it is at lunch) as well as eating exceptionally well in the days before and after.
- Choose to eat before you go to the Christmas party.
- Modify some of your food and recipes for your Christmas party to make them healthier, reduce the saturated fat content, salt content or simply add more vegies or salad to the mix.
- Keep the alcohol down by drinking a glass of water between each alcoholic drink.

### Christmas present ideas

Sick and tired of Christmas shopping? We hear you! Maybe you can combine a cool present and support or encourage a loved one to start or maintain their active lifestyle.

Here are our top 5 present ideas:

1. Buy a series of lessons for a new or old favourite activity: I bought my husband 5 tennis lessons at the local tennis club. He hadn't played in years and was thinking of getting back into it. Increasing his skills meant that he enjoyed joining and participating in the local competition so much more. It can be any sport or even dance classes. Don't forget to include the timetable for the year (if one is available), just to make it that little bit easier.
2. Buy a family pass: Some of our family live interstate and rather than just sending them a boring old calendar, tea towel, t-shirt or some other light thing to reduce postage, we called the local pool and arranged for a 5 session family pass. That not only gave them time together as a family, they were also being active and we saved money on postage, allowing us to spend more on the present. You can get these to play centres, sports centres or local dance studio.
3. Buy new active wear: There's nothing like new clothes to inspire people to get active again. Whether it's a t-shirt or shorts, bathers, even a really good pair of socks for someone who runs, new tennis balls or a basketball. If you're not sure what to buy, then a voucher is the right way to go, they get exactly what they want, at a Christmas sale price!
4. Consider a Frisbee, a cricket set or even a basketball: Family fun and memories are made of this! I remember backyard cricket and soccer later in the afternoon after Christmas lunch with all my cousins and the kids in the local street. It kept us busy and out of our parent's hair!
5. Summer in Australia is all about the beach or being close to the water: Think about getting friends or family beach equipment. It can be the old fashioned towel; it could be a bucket and spade; a boogie board; surfboard... even surfing lessons as a gift voucher.