

THE PROACTIVE

Striving to educate our members to be more *ProActive* toward a healthier lifestyle.



As we approach the holiday season, we'd like to talk about holiday weight gain... as it is not uncommon for individuals to gain weight during the celebrations of the season. Whether it is from the cookies, pies, Holiday meals, lack of time for exercising – sometimes it is easy to forget the toll that the added weight can take on your body. As mentioned in the statistic below, being overweight and/or obese can lead to a greater risk for heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, diabetes, and more.

- In the U.S., more than 1/3 (36.5%) of adults are obese.
- Some of the leading causes of preventable death in the U.S. include obesity related conditions such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes and certain types of cancer.
- Obesity is not only a concern for adults but children and adolescents as well. Approximately 13 million children and adolescents in the U.S. are obese; this equates to about 1 in 3 children living with obesity.

Obesity is defined as having a higher weight than the individual's considered healthy weight. BMI, or body mass index, is the measure that is used to determine whether a person is at ideal weight, overweight, or obese. This value will compare an individual's height with their current weight. According to the CDC, a normal weight is considered a BMI between 18.5 and 25 kg/m². For individuals that have a BMI less than 18.5 kg/m², they are considered underweight. Those with a BMI between 25 and 29.9 kg/m² are considered overweight by these criteria and a BMI greater than 30 kg/m² are considered obese.

While losing weight and increasing physical activity, it is important to realize that you not only will go down in pant size but you will greatly benefit your overall health. When your body weight is within a healthy range, your body circulates blood more efficiently, fluid levels are better managed and you are less likely to develop conditions such as high blood pressure and diabetes.

As far as calorie consumption goes, there are approximately 3,500 calories in 1 pound. In order to lose about 1 pound in a week, most individuals need to subtract approximately 500 calories per day from their diet. Dieting is only half of the solution however; physical activity plays a crucial role in losing and/or maintaining a healthy weight as well as bettering overall health. By following a healthy eating plan and getting enough physical activity, it will help you lose weight and keep it off!

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Obesity and Exercise

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It may seem difficult at first to incorporate regular exercise into your daily schedule, especially during the Holiday season. However, there are many ways to reach your goals throughout the day making it much easier than you would think! Exercise is simply defined as an activity requiring physical effort, carried out to sustain or improve one's health and fitness. Daily exercise and physical activity is the leading path to good health and well-being when combined with healthy eating. It allows you to burn unwanted fat, build muscle, lower cholesterol, ease stress and anxiety, and get a more restful night's sleep.

There are many ways to stay active during the day – walking, dancing, gardening, biking, going to the gym or even completing household chores. Whatever you choose to do, remember to do the activities that you enjoy!

According to the CDC, it is important that at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise is incorporated into your daily life as well as 2 or more days per week of muscle-strengthening activities. Moderate-intensity exercise will result in a person's heart rate to be 50%-70% of his or her maximum heart rate. With that being said, the amount of time a person exercises really depends on the individual. If 30 minutes seems too difficult at first, try splitting your exercise time up into 10 minutes in the morning and 20 minutes in the evening, for example. As you continue to incorporate exercise into your daily life, it will become easier for your body and you may eventually consider increasing your time to 60 or 90 minutes. For muscle-strengthening activities, if you are unable to go to a gym or don't have access to weights – no problem! Try using your own body weight to build muscle through various exercises, or even canned goods for additional lifting weight!

As the temperature begins to get cooler and the Holiday season picks up, sometimes it is hard to find the motivation to complete your 30 minutes of daily exercise. Luckily, there are many ways to remain active while escaping the cold temperatures and Holiday busyness. Some examples include:

- Buying or renting exercise DVDs that you can complete in the comfort of your own home
- Using hand weights or stretch bands to complete some strength training while at home
- Doing housework such as mopping, vacuuming, sweeping, doing laundry or even washing windows
- Joining a gym and using their exercise equipment, participate in swimming or joining other recreational leagues that may interest you
- Taking the stairs instead of the elevator or trying to fit in a walk around your office building on breaks
- Going for a walk in the mall or local schools, or even an indoor gym

While exercising, do not forget to stay hydrated. This is critical to your health, as the more you exercise and sweat, the greater the need to stay hydrated. Drinking water is a classic choice for staying hydrated, but it's important to remember to drink more while you are exercising. There are also flavored sports drinks that can be used, but be aware of the ingredients, as some may have high amounts of sugar and calories. Be sure to drink plenty of fluids before you start your exercise, as well as taking in fluids at regular intervals while exercising. The key is to replace all of the sodium, potassium, electrolytes and minerals that are lost while sweating.

Before beginning your journey to a healthier lifestyle, it is important to realize all of the great outcomes gained from your hard work. The adjustments may be more difficult in the beginning, but the benefits will greatly out-weigh any of the hardships.

- Find healthy eating habits and exercise(s) that you enjoy – it will make you excited for the changes to come!
- Find a variety of recipes and/or exercises to try- this will allow you to switch up your daily routine and make things more fun.
- Make your routine a group event – invite your family and friends for a walk, jog, hike, or a healthy dinner you made.
- Begin substituting small things, such as taking the stairs instead of the elevator or parking in the back of the parking lot instead of right by the door.
- Find your support system, whether it is a family member or a friend. Reward yourself with a treat at the end of the week or month such as a night out to the movies, or trying a new healthy recipe you found with a friend.

Remember, although changing your daily habits can be difficult, it will allow you to become healthier and live a better life. Even if you gained a couple pounds during the Holiday season, it is never too late to begin a healthier life style. Weight loss is not the only benefit of exercising and eating well; it can prevent and improve numerous conditions while bettering your overall health!

Sincerely,
Your ProAct Team

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