



## **Thanksgiving Survival Guide**

*Make it Through the Day...Guilt-Free*

-- By SparkPeople

A gathering of close friends and family is one of the happiest times of year for all of us. Celebrations like Thanksgiving can distract us from our everyday worries...but they can distract us from our diets too. Here's what you need to know so that the only thing you're "adding on" this holiday is joy.

### **A Small Glimpse Into Reality**

#### **Counting Calories**

The average American will consume more than 4,500 calories and 229 grams of fat on Thanksgiving Day alone, according to the Caloric Control Council. Surprisingly, most of these calories come from the all-day snacking in front of the TV while watching parades and sporting events.

#### **The Truth about Fat**

So what happens to all those extra calories? Caloric intake above your total daily energy expenditure (calories in > calories out) is converted into droplets, which are gobbled up by your fat cells. One pound of fat is equivalent to 3,500 calories.

Luckily, following puberty, the body has developed all of its fat cells. Unfortunately, fat cells can never go away. Although they can shrink, you can never actually get rid of the cell itself.

#### **How Many Pounds?**

There's good and bad news here. You've probably heard that the average person gains 7-10 pounds between Thanksgiving and the New Year. However, a joint study conducted by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Medical University of South Carolina found that the average person's weight gain is just over one pound. Sounds harmless, but...

The researchers found that the extra weight is stubborn—still present a year later on 85% of study participants. Gaining one extra pound each year can add up significantly, especially if it ends up sticking around forever, as the study suggests.

#### **You're Getting Very, Very...very...sleepy**

Americans consume over 675 million pounds of turkey on Thanksgiving Day! Although turkey contains a natural sedative called Tryptophan, the chemical doesn't have a large

effect because it's mixed with everything else you eat. That "food coma" you experience is actually the result of your body working overtime to digest all that food!

### **Make it Healthy This Year**

We all have that friend or family member that can eat whatever they want and never gain a pound. But the rest of us, need some tips to help cut back on the bad stuff and enjoy the holiday without guilt.

### **Try Revamping some of your Traditional Recipes**

- Each American consumes nearly 40 pounds of sugar (63,750 calories!) throughout the course of one year. Replacing just one cup of sugar with a sugar substitute like Splenda brand in your pies and other baked goods will save over 750 calories.
- Use whole wheat flour instead of enriched white flour in your baked goods. You'll save 77 calories and prevent a spike of insulin from affecting the body. If you don't want to replace all of your flour, use just half whole wheat and half enriched.
- Cook with skim milk instead of whole or 2% milk. Your potatoes will be just as creamy, and you'll save up to 70 calories.
- Replace eggs in cooking & baking with an egg substitute like Egg Beaters brand. You'll save 60 calories and 238 mg of cholesterol. Or, just replace half.
- Instead of using store-bought or your traditional homemade chip dip, try this out: Use regular mayonnaise for half of the recipe, and replace the other half with reduced fat sour cream. One cup of lower-fat sour cream will provide all the flavor and texture of mayonnaise for 1,300 calories and 150 grams of fat *less*.

### **Feel the Burn!**

You can easily add a little more activity to your holiday routine to help "make up" for some of the extra calories you eat. Burn this many calories in just 10 minutes!

- Walking at brisk pace = 54 calories
- Heavy cleaning = 54 calories
- Step-ups (using stairs) = 175 calories
- Raking leaves = 40 calories

Build lean muscle and boost your metabolism even if you can't make it to the gym by adding 10-15 reps of each of the following:

- Squats—while you brush your teeth
- Lunges—on each leg while you tie your shoes
- Wall Push-Ups—before you walk out the door
- Curls—with a can of soup or bottle of detergent
- Plank hold—while reheating food. Hold for 30 seconds and work up to 3 minutes.

Thanksgiving is just around the corner. Now that you're armed and ready, you can look forward to your time with friends, family, *and* food, without losing your diet momentum.

"If you know you are going to give in to temptations, making up for them with exercise

and healthy choices elsewhere can keep you on track," says Coach Joe. "Be realistic on Thanksgiving and try to break even."