

Thanksgiving is filled with good food, company, and gratitude. For many people, it's also the source of weight gain and anxiety. This season, don't let the holidays derail your healthy habits. TOPS Club, Inc. (Take Off Pounds Sensibly), offers tips to eat right, stay active, and reduce stress.

Eat without Regret

- Watch portion sizes. You don't need to fill your plate with everything that's offered. Sample your favorite foods and use a smaller plate to "trick" yourself into thinking you have consumed more.
- Slow down. Take time to enjoy your food and stop eating before you feel full.
- Change the focus to family at the table. Food and drinks are a large part of the holidays, but they don't have to be the focus. Instead, go around the table and have everyone say why they are thankful, share favorite holiday memories, and reconnect.
- Don't forget about breakfast. Approaching the Thanksgiving meal on an empty stomach can be a recipe for disaster. A nutritious breakfast helps control appetite, so you aren't as inclined to overindulge during dinner. Breakfast can also keep energy levels up.
- Send off leftovers. Don't fill your refrigerator with leftovers; send extra food home with guests. This will help avoid temptation to dip back into high-calorie treats.

Stay Active

- Take a hike or go for a walk. Make time to get moving on Thanksgiving Day. Take a walk or hike in the morning or head outside after dinner. Many communities offer "Turkey Trots," a 5K walk/run, which can be an invigorating way to kick off the day.
- Plan an activity. The day doesn't need to revolve around the Thanksgiving meal. Go for a family bike ride, play football, or have a relay race for the kids.

Say Goodbye to Holiday Stress

- Take time for yourself. During the holidays, there can be a lot of togetherness. It's important to spend a few minutes alone periodically to give yourself time to recharge. Take a nap, listen to music, or simply sneak off to a quiet room in the house to clear your mind.
 - Be thankful. Feeling stressed or tired? Find yourself complaining? Take time to think about or write down the things you're thankful for, big or small. Being grateful can decrease stress, boost the immune system, and improve sleep patterns.
 - Share the load. There's no reason only one person should plan, cook, and entertain. If guests offer to prepare a dish, let them bring it to your Thanksgiving celebration. Also, have the kids help with household chores. This will decrease your workload and make the holiday more pleasant.
 - Help those less fortunate. Forget about your troubles for the day and spend time volunteering at a local soup kitchen or food pantry. Spread cheer by giving back, taking the focus off of your own stress and helping others in need.
 - Breathe! It may seem simple, but people tend to forget to breathe when they're stressed. Take deep breaths to increase your oxygen intake. Find a comfortable place to rest and consciously slow the rate of your breathing. You'll be amazed how good you will feel.
 - Keep it simple. Make a few fancy dishes and keep the others easy. It's okay to scale back the meal and festivities, so you enjoy the holiday rather than spend all of your time preparing.
- To successfully employ these tips, make sure to plan ahead and practice an attitude of gratitude.

The holidays are a time to focus on the people in your life, so make an effort to take the emphasis off of sweet treats and creating the perfect meal and be thankful for friends, family, and good health.