



Eating in Holiday Spirit – The Art of Cheating

*It's never **what** you eat or do, it's always **how much** you eat or move*

When it comes to food consumption, I am the master of cheating, at least according to the people around me. I never cease to amaze people when I am dining or “grazing” at a party or function, by consuming all the classical forbidden foods (and often in Herculean quantities), prompting the proverbial question, “How can you possibly eat like that and stay in such great shape?”

The answer is: I will easily cancel out those excess calories by 3 p.m. tomorrow, or certainly by the end of the day, because when you really get the science of weight gain, weight control becomes a “walk in the park”—sometimes literally.

It's always been simple—it's all about calories

Now that the facts regarding weight control and calories have been globally publicized by the scientific community (washing out all other diet nonsense), most people finally “get it”. Instead of hearing dieters say, “Well, I heard it's not the calories but...,” now most are saying, “I guess you were right.”

Unfortunately, when it comes to weight loss, it generally takes more than hearing the truth before dieters finally get it. What I mean is, most had to experience the journey by trying everything new and old in an effort to lose unwanted poundage. Finally, dieters arrived at the realization that during any program's short-term success, they were cutting calorie intake and/or adding movement calories creating the undisputable equation: eating less calories than you burn = mass reduction. Although they had to come to this conclusion on their own, causing many frustrating experiences, I never said, “I told you so.” Well, almost never.

Okay, now that that's out of the way, let's get down to cheating the system, because as long as you know how it works, you can beat it.

Beating the bulge by doing the math

In mathematics, when you have the answer you can create any numbers that lead to the solution. Same in the case of weight control. The answer is to consume

less or equal to what you burn and nobody cares how you do it. As long as your *total caloric intake* (TCI) is less than *total caloric output* (TCO) for ANY GIVEN TIME PERIOD, whether it be two hours or 20 years, you will have reduced mass. Getting the picture yet?

One more thing to keep in mind, increasing your movements by 100 calories a day has the same effect as removing 100 calories from your food intake. Therefore, your take home messages of *any given time period* and *calorie adjustments in or out* are of equal value. Regarding the latter, it's a heck-of-a lot easier to cut the calories than burn them, especially when you consider that one average-size café mocha contains ~ 500 calories, which is equivalent to a very intense one-hour run.

Party time – just manage the AVERAGE DAILY DEFICIT

There is a certain caloric deficit that a person must average in order to manage body fat. Example: When you are maintaining weight, the deficit is zero, or *calories in = out*.

During weight loss, the deficit is based on the goal, including the desired time frame. Your weekly mass change, shown by weight and/or body fat, validates whether or not your deficit is correct. Notice the key points: *average deficit* and *goal*, not the total number or type of calories used to achieve the deficit or goal. It is the *deficit number* that must be managed. Let's look at an example:

Goal: Lose two pound in November

Our example is modest because most people/dieters would be happy just maintaining weight in November. But when you finally get the “calorie thing,” you gain complete control of your body, making anything possible.

Because one pound of fat = 3500 calories, for the month of November you will have to burn 7000 calories more than you eat. Therefore: *time period* = 30 days, *goal* 2 lbs = *average daily deficit* of ~230 calories (30 days x 230 = ~7000 calories = 2 lbs). Because I am a typical gym participant, we will use me as an example:

At 180 lbs with a sedentary job and working out one hour, three days/week, my average daily calorie burn is 2700 calories (and of course I know this because I never take my bodybugg™ armband off). Using the 2-pound loss goal, I can choose not do anything different in my daily activities, which means my average daily calorie intake will have to be ~2400 calories.

Let's say during a "fun day" I really blow it and consume ~5000 calories. (Of course, some of those would be alcohol, which is generally the culprit that dis-inhibits my usual appetite restraints, leading to the excess calorie consumption). Theoretically, I can make it up in one day by not eating (not advisable), or by adding 2300 calories of movement (my hangover would probably prevent this strategy).

Instead, I would usually alter two days to keep me on track because, factually, if I had been averaging a 230-calorie deficit for the last 10 days, my "binge" would have wiped out my 10-day results.

See how easily plateaus can happen? You work hard and/or eat well for 10 days, blow it once, and you are back where you were 10 days ago. Remember, every calorie counts both in and out, because energy (calories) is neither created nor destroyed, only transformed. That said, it's very simple to make up the loss when you know what you're doing.

Two-day remedy

As long as I know I am going to blow it ahead of time, I always prepare by cutting the previous day's calories in half. In this case, the day before the event I would consume four meals totaling 1200 (see sidebar); consume the 5000 calories on the "fun day" and repeat the 1200 calorie menu the following day, bringing my **three-day calories-in total to 7400**.

Assuming I burned my 2700 cal/day average, bringing the **three-day calories-out total to 8100**, I am basically back on track, especially when you consider I participated in a function that goes well into the night where I will have certainly burned more calories than if I had stayed home and gone to bed...by myself.

In summary, my *three-day calorie deficit total was 700 (8100-7400), or an average daily deficit of ~230 calories*, back on track and a heck of a good time!

And remember, I did this all with food. But for every calorie I burn over 2700 for any of the three days, I can add back to my consumption. For instance, if I had gone for a walk in the park to shake the cobwebs out of my head or pattered around the garden for an hour, I would have burned ~300 calories more than normal, allowing a 1500 calorie total for one of the two 1200-calorie days or 5300 on the big night. Anyway, you get the picture: The more you move the more you get to eat (and that applies all the time). Additionally, you can make up the deficit

over a longer period of time, such as 10 days of 560-calorie deficit. I just like my "pain" quick and done.

Use the formula anytime you wander of course

Best of all, you can repeat the above process anytime necessary. Just plug in the numbers and/or control portion sizes on make-up days.

"Blowout" day's calories don't have to be accurate, just take a guess. Remember that 5000 calories is very difficult for the average person to consume in one day, but entirely possible during the holidays. The alternate method (non-bodybugg™, lack of desire or inability to count calories) is to simply cut every meal you consume in half during the two days you are using to make up for the "fun day."

The advantage of using Apex foods during the "catch-up" periods is that they are more satiating than most other foods of equal caloric value. And, more importantly, packaged Apex foods accurately count your calories, leaving no room for error.

Life is easy when you understand and use only facts. And calories in and out are the simple facts related to weight control. You are now free to control your body composition—anytime.

So, there you have it—the biggest, newest holiday tip from Yours Truly. Attached are the regular boring tips I give you every year—but they can also work.

Sample 1200-calorie menu

7:00 a.m. Meal 1:

Apex Breakfast Square – 230 calories with multi

11:30 a.m. Meal 2:

400 calorie meat of choice sandwich or large salad with favorite protein

4:00 p.m. Meal 3:

400 calories of chicken, starch of choice and salad with multi

8:00 p.m. Meal 4:

Apex cookie – 160 calories with multi

Any choice of non-caloric fluids

The Holidays are upon us with their abundance of stress and food. Here are 21 tips that will help get you successfully through the holidays without sacrificing your healthy lifestyle.

1. Exercise an hour a day, 4-5 days a week during the holidays. A brisk walk, run or bike-ride will burn calories, relieve stress, and elevate your endorphins and mood. If you have to miss a workout, simply increase your daily activities. Be sure not to snack during this time.
2. Avoid eating no fat. Eating moderate amounts of fat at a meal can help you feel full sooner and keep you full longer, just don't overdue it.
3. Don't skip meals. Skipping meals leads to hunger, low energy levels and improper food choices.
4. Don't pass up favorite foods or deprive yourself completely. Moderate consumption is the key.
5. Don't tempt yourself by keeping trigger foods or comfort foods around the house. If you have them, it increases the likelihood that you will overeat.
6. Plan meals by keeping in mind the demands you'll have on your schedule that day.
7. Don't go to a party starving. Before you leave home, eat something light or drink a meal replacement shake. Also, drink a great deal of water the day of the party.
8. When you attend holiday festivities, don't station yourself near the buffet table. Make a clear-cut decision to distance yourself from all goodies.
9. Alcoholic beverages pack on the calories so if you're drinking alcohol, stick to light beer or a champagne spritzer. Watch out for the eggnog, it is high in calories and fat.
10. If you do find yourself feeling depressed, soothe your spirit with a massage, manicure, pedicure, or facial. Men can enjoy this too!
11. When you shop, eat before you leave home so you won't resort to cookie breaks.
12. To satisfy your sweet tooth, set limits. For example, you might allow yourself two decadent desserts per week; just move more the next day.
13. Just because it is the holidays doesn't mean you should give yourself the license to eat everything that passes by. Factor in the little extras into your daily intake.
14. Help out by saving fat and calories when it's feasting time. Make or buy wild rice stuffing, baked sweet potatoes, whole-grain rolls and angel-food cake with fruit.
15. If you are staying with family or friends, ask them if you can have a space in the refrigerator and keep foods on hand to snack on like lean deli meats, cottage cheese, nonfat cheese sticks, etc.
16. If you tend to overeat during family gatherings, plan and visualize what and how much you will eat before you go. Plan additional daily activities for that day or the following one. The additional activity can be anything from a longer shopping day to additional gym time.
17. If you want to really keep yourself honest and the same size during the holiday season wear your most form-fitting blue jeans. Another trick is to tie a string or ribbon around your waist under your shirt that will not budge with the bulge.
18. If you are at the mercy of the dinner host, eat modest amounts of the foods offered and fill up on foods with more fiber and volume and fewer calories. Make a small plate and skip the seconds.
19. Eat whatever you want on the main holiday feast. If you over-do it just go back to your regular plan the next day and move a little more.
20. Take a meditative moment at least one time each day to breathe deeply and clear your mind of all the clutter.
21. Enjoy the season, not just the food!