

10 ways to avoid piling on the kilos this Christmas

The festive season can be a dangerous time for people who are watching their weight. While the average person may gain only one or two kilos, some people can gain six or more. Certainly you don't want to deny yourself, but you don't to indulge so much that you are paying the price for the next few months - or even years. **Sally Symonds**, weight loss coach, motivational speaker and author of *50 Steps to Lose 50kg . . . And Keep It Off* and *50+ Recipes to Lose 50+kg . . . And Keep It Off* lost more than 50 per cent of her original body weight. She shares her top tips for curbing the kilo creep over Christmas.



1 Remember, Christmas is one day - not a couple of months. Set yourself limits as to when you are going to indulge, and when you are going to stick to healthy eating. This helps you feel more in control as well.

2 Avoid counter-regulation (or the "what the hell" effect). This occurs when people try to be "perfect" healthy eaters, and maintain too strict a regime, only to find that, when they deviate from it even slightly, they soon throw in the towel completely. It's the all or nothing effect which, in party season, can be extremely damaging.

3 When entertaining at home, try to offer a large selection of items which you personally don't enjoy all that much (eg chilli-flavoured potato chips if you don't like chilli, or seaweed crackers if you dislike seaweed). Studies show that the fewer options you have to select from, the less you are likely to eat. Obviously still include some of your favourites but try to ensure that they are ones that are lower in fat and calories as well.

4 Ensure you have a host of emergency healthy entertaining options in your freezer and/or pantry. If your partner rings you to say he's invited people over (and they will be there in an hour or so), it's a lot easier - and healthier and tastier - to use these rather than make a mad dash to your local supermarket to buy pre-packaged (and usually high-fat) snack options.

5 If it is an informal gathering at someone's house, then offer to bring a plate. Ensure that what you make is both healthy and enjoyable for you so that you don't feel deprived, but that you don't consume too many calories either.

6 At a party, hang out with the talkers, not the eaters. Focus on the people, not on the

food.

7 Limit your alcohol intake. Not only does alcohol contain empty calories, it also reduces your willpower. Volunteering to be the designated driver is one way to help ensure you keep to only one or two drinks. However, if you are going to drink, try lower calorie options such as vodka, lime and soda, or gin and tonic.

8 Don't eat and walk/stand/move/drive. The more you are moving when you eat, the more likely you are to mindlessly eat. You are not only less conscious of what you are consuming, but how much you are consuming as well.

9 On Christmas Day, try to keep it simple. Fewer ingredients usually means less fat, less stress and less cleaning up. For example, serve roast potatoes rather than potato bake, oysters natural rather than oysters Kilpatrick, and so on.

10 Ensure you have a buffet strategy - work out what is going to work best for you physically and psychologically. For example, you might decide to:

- fill up on low-fat protein, vegetables and salads first;
- visit the buffet only once (not for seconds or thirds);
- skip all the breads and cheeses;
- limit yourself to only sampling three types of desserts (but no more than a tablespoon of each);
- limit yourself to just one type of dessert but first scan the selection for the richest, most decadent one you can find;
- wear your tight jeans/shorts/skirt so you won't be able to eat too much anyway.

For further information, visit www.sallysymonds.com.au

Moroccan Prawn Fritters

750g raw prawns, peeled

420g can corn kernels, drained

1 bunch shallots, chopped

2 egg whites

Moroccan seasoning, to taste

1. Blend prawn meat and corn kernels with a stick blender until they form a smooth paste.
2. Roughly beat egg whites with a fork and

add to prawn mixture along with shallots and seasoning.

3. Stir until thoroughly combined.

4. Heat non-stick frypan over medium to high heat. Spoon tablespoonfuls of the mixture into the hot pan.

5. Slightly flatten each spoonful with a spatula to form a fritter-like shape.

6. Cook fritters on one side until they begin to change colour.

7. Turn fritters over and leave on heat until cooked through (they need approximately 3-4 minutes on each side).



Bean and Bacon Muffins

1 cup wholemeal self-raising flour

**¼ cup low-fat tasty cheese,
grated**

125g low-fat bacon

220g can baked beans

½ cup low-fat milk

2 egg whites

Olive oil spray

Cracked black pepper, to taste

1. Preheat oven to 180C and chop bacon into small squares and microwave on high for approximately 3 minutes or until

cooked through.

2. Lightly spray a 24-hole mini muffin pan with olive oil spray.

3. Combine flour, cheese, bacon, pepper and baked beans in a large bowl.

4. Add milk and egg and stir until just combined.

Spoon into muffin pan.

5. Place in oven and cook for approximately 25 minutes, or until a skewer inserted into a muffin comes out clean.

6. Leave in pan for 5 minutes before turning onto a wire rack to cool.



Lamb Bites

½ cup chickpeas

500g low-fat lamb mince

½ cup mint leaves, finely chopped

Cracked black pepper to taste

1 teaspoon smoked paprika

1. Preheat oven to 180C.

2. Drain and rinse chickpeas and blend until they form a paste.

3. Mix with lamb mince, mint, pepper and paprika.

4. Form into walnut size balls.

5. Place on an oven tray lined with baking paper and bake in oven until brown.

