**ENJOYING CHRISTMAS - NO GUILT**

The hardest part of the year to be trying to lose weight is the 2 weeks from Christmas to New Year. It’s getting colder, the days are shorter, you crave stodgy warm food and leaving the house to exercise seems like the hardest thing to do.

Add to that Christmas Parties and celebration drinks after work. The meal you eat Christmas day and the rest…. The New Year’s Eve celebrations and pretty soon your gaining weight not losing it. You feel depressed that you failed and indulged in things you wouldn’t normally do, you feel fat, lethargic and not motivated to move.

BUT

It doesn’t have to be that way. I am not saying you should be counting calories on Christmas day and that you can’t drink and enjoy yourself. I think being able to enjoy ourselves socially without guilt is so important for our emotional and spiritual health. What I am saying is that you can navigate this season well and come out of it still on track and motivated to keep going.

If you want to avoid excess weight gain this Christmas season, but still enjoy yourself without the guilt here are a few tips.

1.Planning – like anything you need to look at your calendar and mark down the social events you are committed to. If it’s a restaurant, look at the menu and pick the best options. Maybe switch your alcohol to sprits to reduce calories. Maybe have just a starter and a main and leave the dessert. Or if you have a sweet tooth opt for a main and a dessert.

You could share a dessert with a friend which halves the calories and allows you to enjoy eating it at the same time.

All you need to do is be mindful, think about it a little more and you can still enjoy your night out without compromising too much on the goal you made.

2. Be realistic – This time of year is one to celebrate so weight loss may just have to be put on hold for 2 weeks to allow yourself to enjoy the season. If you can’t take time out to indulge a little once a year, then maybe you need to rethink your priorities.

2 weeks of relaxing, indulging and socialising will not undo 12 months of effort and hard work. What it will do is make you happier.

Do away with the guilt and just enjoy the moment and the people you are with.

You have 50 other weeks in the year to work on losing weight.

3. Increase your training – If you know that you will be eating more than try to combat it by increasing your training. It will help keep you in a positive mindset and lessen the guilt you feel from all the parties and food you will consume.

4. Be on it with your meals – Another way to offset the social activities is to eat well around them. Plan your meals so you are spot on and don’t deviate from them. When you can be good be very good. This allows you to enjoy going out and spending time with family and friends – No Guilt.

5. Go walking more everyday – Another good way to increase the calories you burn is to go walking every day – Aim for 10000-15000 steps at least every day over December and January. Walking increases the calories you burn but it doesn’t increase your hunger like other exercise can. If you burn 300 more calories a day from walking on top of what you already do; that’s 2100 kcals more a week you burn which goes a long way to helping you out with the added parties and food.

6. Don’t be on a diet Christmas Day - One sure way to ruin your day and leave you with a whole bunch of guilt is to stick to your calories on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year’s Eve. Is it really that important in the grand scheme of things that you count calories on these days?

Can you eat less on other days to allow yourself to eat more?? YES

Can you forget about weight loss for 2 weeks and just chill out and have fun?? YES

Can you still be sensible and not over indulge and still enjoy yourself?? YES

Don’t burden others with your clean eating ways and perfect calorie intake – let them enjoy the food even if you want to sit there eating food from a Tupperware container.

**It’s time to chill out, enjoy yourself but not go too crazy – use the tips above to your advantage that way instead of piling loads of weight on you can maybe stay the same but you will look back on this Christmas and New Year as a great time – GUILT FREE.**