

# Client Holiday Survival Guide

**ISSA**

INTERNATIONAL SPORTS  
SCIENCES ASSOCIATION



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# Fitness tips for the holidays

The holidays are a festive time of year with seemingly endless opportunities to cheat on your diet and skip a workout. Weight gain is almost an assumed part of this season. But it doesn't have to be that way. Find your focus and help clients stay on track with these fitness tips for the holidays.

## Plan Ahead

Make time for your workouts just as you make time for each of your festive gatherings—put it on the calendar. Planning ahead by adding your workouts to your schedule ensures they will fit into your day. Many of the holiday parties and dinners take place in the evening, so set aside time each morning to go for a run, hit the gym, or take part in online fitness classes at home. Encourage clients to plan out their training sessions with you and when they'll fit in workouts even if they're not in town for the holidays.

## Go Small

As your schedule fills with holiday activities, you might not always have time enough time for a full workout, so don't be afraid to break it up into to smaller chunks. Go for a 20-minute run before work, then stop by the gym for 20 minutes of weights on the way home. Remind your clients that some physical activity is better than no activity, even just one mini workout is better than sitting all day. Stay accountable to including a workout but allow for flexibility with duration. This will minimize stress while still helping clients meet their fitness goals.

## Be Creative

Along with being flexible in your scheduling, get creative with your activities. Even if you're spending

the whole day out shopping or at your family's house for Christmas, you can still get your body moving.

## Take the Stairs

Make elevators and escalators off-limits from Thanksgiving to New Year's Day. If you're at the mall and want to add to the challenge, stop at a store on the lower level of the mall, then make your next store on the top level, then switch again. You'll get in a solid stair workout by the time you're done picking out gifts. You can also take a few extra laps around the mall to get in more activity.

## Go Outside

Don't let winter weather slow you down. As long as you dress accordingly, there are a variety of ways to take advantage of the snow and colder temperatures while getting in a workout. Whether you live near a frozen pond or in a big city with temporary ice rinks, you can find ice skating just about anywhere during the winter season. Plan a ski trip or go snowshoeing. If you don't have snow, go on a hike or for a walk around the neighborhood.

## Start an Annual Competition

Get your family and friends involved in fun and fitness during your next holiday gathering and turn it into an annual event so everyone has a reason to stay accountable for the next year. Organize a snowman building relay or set up capture the flag with Santa hats. Have a great sliding hill available? Set up a bracket competition for the fastest ride down the hill—winner gets to open the first present.

## Get a Workout Buddy

Even if it's just for the holiday season, having a workout partner can help you stay motivated and

accountable. You're more likely to get to the gym if you have someone there waiting to workout with you. To step it up, make a bet: if one person skips a workout, they owe the other person \$2.00 or they have to wear a Santa hat during the next workout. A little fun can boost everyone's motivation.

## Sign Up for a Holiday Race

Registering for a race keeps you accountable to your fitness goals and is another easy way to have holiday fun with family and friends. Get your group matching Santa hats, reindeer antler headbands, or decorative leggings to laugh your way through a 5k. Encourage your clients to sign up for a New Year's run to start the year off in a healthy direction.

## Reward yourself

In addition to busy holiday schedules, winter brings fewer hours of daylight and colder temps, dropping your motivation even more. Find something that will get you out of bed for an early morning workout or willing to brave the cold for a run or a trip to the gym. Treat yourself to new winter leggings to inspire more outdoor runs. Make sure you stick to the workouts you planned by placing \$1.00 - \$5.00 in jar for each one you complete, then spend the money on something fun after the holiday season.

## Log your Food and Fitness

Remember our post about Food Logging? Track your nutrition and activity throughout the holidays to stay accountable to healthy goals. Refresh your clients on the benefits of food logging to ensure they keep accurate records even if they slip up on their diet from time to time. It's easy fall into the "just one more" trap with cookies and other sweets, but knowing you'll have to include each of those cookies in your food log might help you resist the temptation.

## Hydrate

With the holidays comes a variety of festive drinks—eggnog, peppermint lattes, sugar cookie martinis, and more. These drinks are often overloaded with calories and not the best at keeping you hydrated, so drink them in moderation. Keep your water bottle full and accessible, and be sure to drink plenty of water before any holiday gathering. This not only helps with staying hydrated, but it also helps you feel full so you're more likely to resist the extra food. Considering making one of your workout rewards a new festively decorated water bottle to inspire you to stay hydrated through the holidays.

So, with a little planning and creativity, maintaining a fitness plan through the holidays can still leave room for fun and festivities. Plus, you'll save yourself and your clients a lot of extra work in the new year by staying on track—no one wants lose the progress they worked so hard gain.

And if you're ready to step up your game in the new year, check out one of our certifications. Becoming a specialist or getting certified for the first time is an excellent way to keep yourself motivated and accountable to a healthy lifestyle. From corrective exercise to senior fitness, there are plenty of new ways to enhance your knowledge and skills in the fitness industry.



# Healthy Grocery Shopping Made Easy

We have never enjoyed more choices and varieties of products at the grocery store than we do today. Whether it's pre-cooked, fat free, organic, gluten free, or low calorie, it's there on the shelf, tucked inside the freezer, and stacked high and wide in the produce section. But with continually new offerings and specialization aplenty comes the need to be able to make sense of which foods are best for health, both as a fitness professional and as a client.

Unhealthy eating can lead to serious health issues. And while clients are not intentionally eating food that can do them harm, they may lack the info needed to choose what's healthy while also tasting good. When it comes to healthy grocery shopping there are a few key tips we should encourage clients to keep in mind before pushing that cart through the aisles.

## **Make a grocery list and stick to it**

Planning meals out for as much as a week makes sense in a lot of ways, including when looking to make healthy choices for a balanced diet. Each meal plan should include a lean protein as well as an appropriate mix of fruits, vegetables, and grains. Failure to do so can lead to a shortage of necessary nutrients and, in some cases, poor decisions. For example, grilled salmon, whole-grain rice, and fresh green beans make for a delicious and healthy option. Without proper planning the meal could end up being fried cod instead, of grilled salmon, and french fries—a missed opportunity for healthy grains and vegetables.

# GROCERY LIST



Plan snacks as well. Pick up fresh fruits and vegetables on a regular basis to use as a healthy snack option. When shopping for others in the household, check with them to see what kind of fruits or vegetables they would like you to bring home. That helps ensure that everyone is on board with the idea of eating healthy and food won't end up being tossed out when no one eats it. And don't make the mistake in thinking that drinking apple juice is always the same as eating an apple. Many fruit juices contain a high amount of sugar. Making those types of mistakes can be minimized by planning ahead.

## Don't go to the grocery store hungry

Support your healthy grocery shopping by having

something to eat before you go to the store. Impulse buying can add to the waistline and unnecessarily help thin the wallet. You are less likely to reach for a tempting item that's not on your grocery list if you aren't hungry and subconsciously thinking about tearing into something that tastes good. Another bit of advice: Keep those eyes straight ahead at the checkout line because candy bars and beef jerky are not "just rewards for a job well done" or to "take the edge off your hunger". Wait until you get home to make something healthy to eat.

## Avoid highly processed food

Food loaded with preservatives to provide a long shelf life, such as packaged cookies, canned foods, frozen dinners, and fruit snacks, usually are high in calories and low in essential nutrients. While they offer a quick option for a meal or snack, they have a negative impact on your healthy eating.

Recommend to your clients the following choices:

- Canned tuna can be a healthy choice, but opt for tuna packed in water rather than oil
- Select canned fruit packed in natural juices and not syrup.
- Choose breads, pastas, cereal, and rice made with whole grains

Bottom line: Make sure you read the list of ingredients before making a purchase.

## Understand the food industry lingo

Do not underestimate the lengths food companies will go to market their products. They are in the business to make money, of course, so when they identify a hot trend they won't hesitate to try to use it to their advantage. Healthy food doesn't always have a clear label, so know that:

- Natural and organic products can still contain a lot of fat and calories
- Low-fat items can be loaded with sugar
- Light (or lite) is often used to catch the consumer's eye, but don't automatically equate to a healthy food

The best advice in this instance is to educate yourself and your clients so you can read the label to make sure that what you are buying meets your needs and expectations.

So, with a bit of meal planning, making a list, prioritizing your time at the store, and knowing the right lingo, you can make healthy grocery shopping a breeze. Plus, if you're looking to educate yourself more in the area of nutrition, ISSA offers a comprehensive course to become a Certified Nutrition Specialist. Support a healthy lifestyle for you and your clients with advanced nutrition information.

# KNOW THE LINGO

## HEALTHY GROCERY SHOPPING

CALORIE-FREE

Less than 5 calories per serving

FAT FREE

Less than 0.5 grams of fat per serving

LEAN

Less than 10 grams of total fat per serving

LIGHT / LITE

Nutritionally altered to have 1/3 fewer calories or 1/2 the fat of the regular version

LOW FAT

3 grams or less per serving

ORGANIC

Source used no antibiotics, growth hormones, pesticides or fertilizers using synthetic ingredients, bioengineering, or ionizing radiation

WHOLE

Unprocessed or unrefined; not officially regulated

EXCELLENT SOURCE OF

20% or more of the daily value requirement

GOOD SOURCE

10-19% of the daily value requirement per serving

LOW-CHOLESTEROL

20 milligrams or less per serving

LOW CALORIE

40 calories or less per serving

NATURAL

Contains no artificial ingredients or color; not officially regulated

REDUCED

25% less of a nutrient than the regular version



# Know It All

ISSA's Certified Nutrition Specialist

Everything you need to know to deliver life-changing results for yourself and your clients by mastering the art and science of nutrition.

[issaonline.edu](http://issaonline.edu)





# Food Logging

## The What, Why, and How to Get Client Results

Too often, eating is an unconscious act. By taking the time to track your daily food intake or encouraging clients to track theirs, you bring awareness to those overlooked eating habits. This simple act, done over time, can help you or your clients identify and understand when, where, and with whom you make the best and worst food choices.

But a food log is more than just a planning tool to keep you out of trouble. In addition to counting calories, a food log can help you track your macronutrients and micronutrients. We've all been told to eat a balanced diet, but it's hard to understand what that is until you start to track what each meal looks like and how each food item is broken down into its component macro- and micronutrients. Knowing this information makes it easier to fill in nutrition gaps with better food choices.

Likewise, getting clients to understand macros can help them lose weight. In our article, *Losing Weight Too Fast: What are the long-term results?*, author Dan Gastelu warns against crash diets (1200 kcal or less per day) stating they are unhealthy and unsustainable. It is much healthier to gradually decrease your caloric intake while gradually increasing your physical activity. The ISSA recommends the zig-zag method for carbohydrate intake to fuel intense physical activity and support weight loss. A food journal will help clients stay on track.

### Behavior vs Goals: Cognitive Dissonance

The major benefit of a food log is the insight it provides – not to you, but to your client – regarding their goals and behaviors. Perhaps you have a new client who is no stranger to dieting. He says he has tried every diet plan on Google and swears he follows each plan to the letter. You see him squirm a bit or perhaps he looks off in the distance as he adds this last statement. Your client, although he wants to be a good dieter, honestly hasn't made it past day one on any of the diets he's tried. This is a difficult place for him to be,

but it is also the perfect point for you to come alongside and help him discover which behaviors are sabotaging his results. Enter the concept of cognitive dissonance.

In psychology, cognitive dissonance is a feeling of internal conflict or discomfort when one's beliefs conflict with their thoughts or actions. Your client knows they shouldn't eat that jumbo muffin at the coffee shop, but they do anyway and then immediately feel horrible about it. According to ChangingMinds.org (2018), there are three choices one can make to reduce the discomfort of dissonance:

- Change their behavior.
- Justify their behavior by changing the conflicting cognition.
- Justify their behavior by adding new cognitions.

The goal of a food journal is to empower your client to change their behavior, not justify it.

The same ChangingMinds.org article states that "dissonance is most powerful when it is about our self-image... If an action has been completed and cannot be undone, then the after-the-fact dissonance compels us to change our beliefs." This is perhaps why a client will say to you, "my genes are bad," or that they have always had a slow metabolism. Rather than feeling like a failure, they change their beliefs to match their outcomes.

## What Should I Write in a Food Journal?

When it comes to a daily food log, the quantity of information isn't as important as the quality of information. So, let's take a moment to talk about how and what you need to track.

### What to Log

1. **Time:** What time of day you eat the most calories? How often do you eat?
2. **Environment:** Where were you? Who was with you? Did someone pay for your meal?
3. **Emotions:** How did you feel?
4. **Ingredients:** When cooking at home, track each ingredient and simply divide by the number of servings to determine your total intake.
5. **Condiments:** Peanut butter, mayonnaise, dressing, etc. It's easy to underestimate the serving size of these toppings.
6. **Water:** You can track this or leave it out, it depends on your goals.
7. **Exercise:** You don't have to track your physical activity, but remember that your "net calories per day" will be the most important factor in improving or maintaining your body composition the healthy way.

## How to Log Your Food

Here are a few tips to make food logging a better experience.

### Log Food as You Eat

Again, bringing awareness to your eating habits is important. When your favorite foods are set in front of you, it's easy to forget about your goals and just dig in. So pause, take a deep breath, whip out your food log, and write it down.

### Take a Photo

Take a photo of your plate—with your hand in the photo, palm up. Why? Measuring portion sizes is tedious, especially if you're short on time. The ISSA Specialist in Fitness Nutrition textbook states, "a portion size of protein is visually about the size of the palm of your hand, between 20 and 30g." You can also measure carbs with a cupped hand and servings of fat with your thumb.

### A Paper Food Log vs. an App

Research has found that apps are generally faster and easier to use than paper food journals and some provide immediate feedback in the form of daily calorie and macro reports (Hutchesson et al., 2015). But some people find them cumbersome. In a recent scientific study, MyFitnessPal users reported that it was difficult to estimate portion sizes for their favorite foods, stating the food database inside the app doesn't have easy-to-use household measures (Teixeira et al., 2018).

A few other apps to track your daily food intake include the Fitbit app, Fat Secret, Lose It!, and Spark People.

- The Fitbit app has 3.9 of 5 stars in the Google Play Store and 3.7 stars in the App Store. Most of the complaints deal with the app not syncing with activity trackers. However, if you're only tracking meals then you should be good to go, as none of the reviews has any complaints about the food database. Cost: Free
- For simply tracking calories in and calories out, the FatSecret app seems to satisfy many of its users' needs with 4.4 out of 5 stars in the Google Play Store and 4.7 stars in the App Store for Apple. One user said, "Not only for personal use, but I put all of my clients in the app as it sends me reports daily. Love the macros are so easy to track!" Cost: In-app purchases \$0.99 - \$44.99
- Lose It! by Fit Now Inc. has a good overall rating (4.4/4.7 stars) but some users complain that the food database is difficult to navigate and that tracking macros is a paid, rather than free feature. Cost: Free - \$39.99/year subscription
- Spark People Calorie Counter and Diet Tracker (4.5/4.6 stars) has some of the most positive user comments regarding the food database and ease of use. An added bonus, mentioned by one user, is the encouragement and interaction you get from other "Sparklers". Cost: \$4.99 - \$29.99

If you prefer old-fashioned pen and paper, you can find printable food journals for sale online or create your own. Keep in mind, you'll have to find an adequate food database to break down each meal and food item into calories and macros.

## Does Food Logging Help You Lose Weight?

In a word, yes.

In a recent ISSA blog article, *How does Mindfulness Achieve Weight Loss?*, the author demonstrates how mindfulness can help you make goal-related decisions and create healthier habits. One part of this process is asking questions to uncover if the motivation to eat—or craving—is triggered by hunger or some underlying emotion or circumstance. As a trainer, this is a great way to get to know your client while helping them uncover a root of the problem.

You can't make the right choices to achieve a weight loss goal until you get to know your current habits. That is where a food journal can help. Although you don't need to track your food choices for the rest of your life, practicing this skill periodically will help you and your clients

- learn the correct serving size for each food group to meet your specific needs,
- identify gaps in your current diet so you can supplement as needed,
- make the right choices to meet your goals whether they are to gain or lose weight.

And remember, you can learn more about building better food habits and using nutrition to enhance your clients' lives through the ISSA's Certified Nutrition Specialist certification program.

### References

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3. Teixeira, V., Voci, S. M., Mendes-Netto, R. S. and da Silva, D. G. (2018), The relative validity of a food record using the smartphone application MyFitnessPal. *Nutr Diet*, 75: 219-225. doi:10.1111/1747-0080.12401





# Make Holiday Leftovers Nutritious

The holidays are glorious when it comes to food. And, many of us take the opportunity to cheat big time on our diets and healthy eating habits.

Splurging for a day or a meal, like the main event on Thanksgiving or Christmas Day, is approved by most trainers and health experts, but what about all the leftovers? They can really lead to weight gain if you don't use them wisely.

It's not too hard for clients to get back on track after one day of indulgence, but when faced with several days' worth of leftover goodies, it's nearly impossible. Help your clients take control. Check out these tips and ideas for making holiday leftovers not just tasty, but also nutritious as you and your clients make your way back to healthy eating.

## Potatoes and Other Carbs

Most holiday meals will definitely topple your carb limit if you let them. If you're on a sensible, balanced eating plan, though, you can continue to enjoy the mashed potatoes, stuffing, and sweet potatoes in limited, healthful ways after the big meal.

Make a veggie-packed shepherd's pie. This tasty casserole is a mix of meat and vegetables baked with mashed potatoes on top. Fill the inside with healthy foods and use just a thin covering of leftover potatoes.

Turn extra stuffing into individual frittatas for portion control. Mix stuffing and eggs and bake in a muffin tin.

Make savory pancakes for dinner with leftover mashed potatoes. Add eggs, lots of vegetables, and a little cheese to make a nutritious and well-rounded potato pancake.

Getting rid of leftover carbs can be tricky if you're watching your calorie intake and avoiding weight gain, so save using your starchy leftovers for tough workout days. You'll burn them right up.

Keep mind that carbs can be a tricky situation and even though clients are trying their hardest during the holidays, they may still have trouble losing weight. The ISSA experts weigh in on what could be going wrong.

## Leftover Turkey and Ham

The meats are the stars of holiday dinners, and turkey and ham are the most popular. These can be great sources of protein, but it's also possible to overdo it, especially with preservative- and salt-laden ham.

### Healthy Turkey Meals

Here are some great ideas for using leftover turkey in the days following the big meal:

- Use slices of lean white meat in place of bread for a low-carb sandwich.
- Another low-carb option for turkey sandwiches is to use pieces of leftover turkey in a lettuce wrap with plenty of vegetables.
- Throw the leftover parts of the turkey that are difficult into a soup pot with water and vegetables. Let it simmer to make a broth you can freeze and use for months in homemade soups. Be sure to strain before you freeze.
- Make soup with the turkey broth and add some of your leftover vegetables, like roasted carrots and other vegetables.
- Add shredded turkey leftovers to stuffed, baked vegetables. Mix it up with a whole grain, some beans and vegetables, and maybe a little cheese to stuff a pepper or zucchini for a healthy, baked dinner.

### The Fatty, Salty Ham

Turkey is already pretty nutritious and suitable for a healthy diet and lifestyle. As a lean meat, turkey can be incorporated pretty easily into your healthy meals after the holiday, just encourage clients not to deep fry it. Ham, on the other hand, is pretty fatty and salty, so it should be used sparingly.

To use ham leftovers healthfully, use smaller amounts with other, healthier foods. For example, add a little bit of ham to a vegetable soup recipe. You won't need to add

much fat or salt to the soup, as it will be provided by the ham. Avoid any recipes that would require frying the ham or using oil or additional salt. Instead, add a handful of cubes to a salad or a healthy grain and vegetable bowl.

## Make Holiday Leftovers Nutritious by Cutting Sugar

Many of your holiday leftovers will be loaded with sugar and calories. The key to making these into healthy leftovers is to thin them out with other ingredients that have less sugar. Use them as your sweetener, sparingly.

- Use a tablespoon of cranberry sauce in your oatmeal or in a whole grain pancake recipe.
- Add a little bit of extra pumpkin pie filling to a smoothie recipe.
- Mix some of that sinfully sugary sweet potato casserole into pancake or waffle batter with nuts and no additional sweetener.
- Make whole grain muffins with extra sweet potatoes or squash and spread with a little bit of cranberry sauce.
- Eat a dollop of cranberry sauce on slices of cheese for a mid-afternoon snack.

Sugar can really sabotage a diet, any time of year. Check out what experts at the ISSA have to say about the most successful way to eat for weight loss.

## Don't Forget to Workout after Those Holiday Leftovers

To really take holiday health and fitness up a notch, don't let your clients make the season an excuse not to workout. This can be a big factor in holiday weight gain, nearly as much as all the extra food. It's a busy time of the year too, but make fitness a priority and write it into your schedule and your clients'.

Even if you can't get away from family obligations on the big day, you can still get in some physical activity. Challenge clients to think outside the box. Volunteer to take the kids outside to burn off some steam; organize a flag football game in the yard; or instead of napping after the holiday meal, take everyone on a walk around the neighborhood.

Knowing how to make holiday leftovers nutritious can make the difference between a one-day diet blow out and one that stretches for multiple days. Use these tips and come up with some creative ideas of your own, and if all else fails, share those leftovers with others so you're not eating them all.

If you want to learn more about nutrition and fitness, check out the ISSA's comprehensive course for certified nutrition specialists.



## How to Make Holiday Leftovers Nutritious

### Potatoes and Stuffing

- Use vegetables and meat for shepherd's pie with leftover mashed potatoes on top.
- Mix stuffing and eggs to make individual frittatas in a muffin tin.
- Use mashed potatoes, vegetables, eggs, and cheese for savory pancakes.
- Indulge in high-carb leftovers on days you work out hard.

### Turkey and Ham

- Make a low-carb sandwich with turkey slices instead of bread.
- Put turkey pieces in lettuce wraps.
- Use leftover turkey to make a broth that can be frozen.
- Make soup with broth, turkey meat, and leftover vegetables.
- Shred leftover turkey and mix with vegetables, whole grains, beans, and cheese to make stuffed, baked zucchini, peppers, or squash.
- Use leftover ham sparingly and with more healthful foods, such as in soup, in salads, or in grain bowls.

### Sweet Leftovers

- Add a little cranberry sauce to oatmeal or whole grain pancakes.
- Use pumpkin pie filling to sweeten a smoothie.
- Make pancake or waffle batter with sweet potato casserole as a flavorful sweet element. Add nuts and use whole grains.
- Bake whole grain muffins with leftover sweet potatoes and eat with a spoonful of cranberry sauce.
- Eat cheese with a small amount of cranberry sauce.

### Stay Active

- Keep up with a workout routine through and after the holiday.
- Encourage the family to get active with a walk, playing with the kids, or getting a casual game of soccer or football going in the yard.