

# Healthy Holidays!

## Participant Guide



602-909-8598  
[www.joannedeck.com](http://www.joannedeck.com)

## Workshop Objectives

1. Identify opportunities to make this holiday season healthier than past years
2. Create a healthy new mindset about how you approach the holidays
3. Recognize the typical stressors in your holiday season, and learn ways to prevent or minimize the distress
4. Describe techniques for approaching food and eating differently this year
5. Identify ways to maintain your activity level during the holidays
6. Commit to taking action to make this holiday season healthier and more enjoyable

## Healthy Holiday Assessment

**Instructions:** *Carefully read each statement, and circle the number that best describes your feelings or behavior during **your typical holiday season (November – December)**. Please be completely honest with your answers.*

	<i>Item</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neutral (N/A)</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>
1.	At holiday events, I focus on enjoying family and friends rather than the food and drink.	4	3	2	1	0
2.	I maintain my regular exercise program.	4	3	2	1	0
3.	I am selective about the holiday events/activities I attend and say “no” when it’s best for my well-being.	4	3	2	1	0
4.	I see Thanksgiving and Christmas/Chanukah as separate holidays rather than one continuous “holiday season.”	4	3	2	1	0
5.	At holiday meals and parties, I consciously monitor my eating and drinking to avoid overindulging.	4	3	2	1	0
6.	I incorporate activity such as walks, skating, or dancing into holiday get-togethers.	4	3	2	1	0
7.	I delegate tasks and ask for support to avoid overdoing.	4	3	2	1	0
8.	I stick to my regular routines around eating, sleeping, and exercise.	4	3	2	1	0
9.	I strive to balance my food choices and monitor my serving sizes.	4	3	2	1	0
10.	I use exercise and activity to relieve stress.	4	3	2	1	0
11.	I look for ways to save time and effort such as having cards preprinted or gifts wrapped, without feeling guilty.	4	3	2	1	0
12.	I set appropriate boundaries with family members as necessary and don’t let family situations affect my holiday enjoyment.	4	3	2	1	0
13.	At a party or buffet, I choose carefully and don’t feel as if I have to have everything.	4	3	2	1	0
14.	When given a choice, I choose to do holiday tasks/activities that keep me moving such as house cleaning, shopping, decorating and volunteering at a local charity.	4	3	2	1	0
15.	I get 7 – 8 hours of sleep per night.	4	3	2	1	0

<i>Item</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neutral (N/A)</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>
16. I have realistic expectations about how the events I plan will go and do not feel responsible for everyone's good time.	4	3	2	1	0
17. I avoid giving food gifts and discourage people from giving me food.	4	3	2	1	0
18. When time is tight, I choose to shorten my exercise time rather than skip it altogether.	4	3	2	1	0
19. I use appropriate stress relievers such as supportive family/friends and relaxation rather than food, alcohol or caffeine.	4	3	2	1	0
20. Each year I examine my holiday traditions and establish new ones or modify my old ones to be healthier and more enjoyable, if necessary.	4	3	2	1	0
21. I snack on fruit, vegetables, and other healthy foods rather than holiday cookies and candy.	4	3	2	1	0
22. When shopping, I park at a distance and use the stairs to increase my activity.	4	3	2	1	0
23. When preparing for events and get-togethers, I let go of the details that no one will remember anyway.	4	3	2	1	0
24. I do what I can to maintain balance and avoid "all or nothing" thinking.	4	3	2	1	0
25. When preparing holiday meals, I avoid making too much so the leftovers are minimized.	4	3	2	1	0
26. I give and request gifts that encourage wellness such as a session with a personal trainer, exercise clothing, or a gift certificate to a sporting goods store.	4	3	2	1	0
27. I set a realistic budget, avoid overspending, and do not feel guilty about it.	4	3	2	1	0
28. I recognize what's most important to me and make time to fit those things in.	4	3	2	1	0

**How to Score:**

*Enter the score you have circled for each question in the spaces provided below. Next, total the score for each specific healthy holiday category, and obtain a rating for each category according to the criteria shown below.*

	<b>Food/Eating</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Stress/Time Mgt</b>	<b>General</b>
	1.	2.	3.	4.
	5.	6.	7.	8.
	9.	10.	11.	12.
	13.	14.	15.	16.
	17.	18.	19.	20.
	21.	22.	23.	24.
	25.	26.	27.	28.
<b>Total:</b>				
<b>Rating:</b>				

**Category Rating:**

**Excellent** = 25 – 28 Your answers show that you are aware of the importance of this category to your enjoyment of the holidays and are putting your knowledge to work. You are setting a good example for others to follow.

**Good** = 18 – 24 Your healthy habits in this area are good, and there is some room for improvement. Look again at the items you scored 3 or below, and identify changes you can make to improve your behavior this year to increase your enjoyment of the holidays.

**Needs Improvement**  $\leq$  18 Your answers indicate that changes in your choices could significantly enhance your enjoyment of the holidays. Focus on the area(s) where you feel the greatest dissatisfaction, and make a commitment to approach the holidays differently this year by changing your behavior. Be sure to enlist the support you need.

## Creating a New Mindset

Does the assessment suggest there is some room for improvement? The first place to start when making any change is with our thinking. We must be open to change and believe it is possible. Can you envision a holiday season that is enjoyable and relatively stress-free and doesn't leave you tired and carrying more weight than you started with? It *is* possible! Set an intention for the kind of holiday you'd like to have this year. As you move through the workshop, examine your old traditions, habits, and beliefs, and see where you'd benefit from adopting new ones.

Begin by considering when the holiday season starts for you. Did it start at Halloween? Will it continue past January 1? What triggers the start for you – Thanksgiving, the day you put up your Christmas tree or other holiday decorations, or something else? If possible, start your celebrating later in season; for example, bake holiday treats closer to the actual holiday. When do you consider the holiday to be over – when the special food is gone? If so, make less food and end the holiday earlier than you have in the past.

A successful strategy for many people is to avoid thinking of the holidays as one long season; rather, manage the season by going from event to event. In between events, stick to your routines as much as possible, and conduct yourself the way you would any other of time year. Eat regular, balanced meals; be active; sleep 7—8 hours a night; and take care of your health.

Another effective strategy is to set goals for yourself around how you want to handle managing your weight, incorporating exercise, managing your time, and minimizing stress. Take the time to consciously think about these areas, and set an intention in each area. You'll have time to do that at the end of the workshop.

During the holidays, avoid all or nothing thinking. Remember that ten minutes of exercise is better than no exercise and one hors d'oeuvres is better than five (and better than none if skipping them leaves you feeling deprived.) Aim for balance and moderation.

Help yourself and others and avoid giving and requesting gifts of food. If you are given food, consider re-gifting it to a non-profit group, bringing it to a potluck, or serving it at your own holiday party.

## What Causes You Holiday Stress?

*Take sixty seconds to list the first things that come to mind.*

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*As others mention items you didn't think of, consider whether they are stressors for you. If so, add them to your list.*

## Recognizing and Preventing Stressors

Despite the celebrations and good intentions, the holidays are stressful for many people. Time demands, limited funds, unrealistic expectations, and family issues – all of these and more can turn what should be a joyous season into a hectic and even traumatic time. This year, make a conscious choice to create the holiday experience you want to have.

Start by being selective with the events you attend. Just because you're invited to six parties, doesn't mean you have to attend them all. Consider rotating your attendance; attend his employer's party this year and yours next year. How would it feel if you went separately – you attend your work party while your spouse attends hers? Or simply just decline – whatever works best for you.

Once you've decided on your priorities for the year, "pen" those on the calendar first, and plan everything else around them. Shopping, baking, and decorating can all be worked in; plan ahead so you can enjoy attending your son's holiday concert.

Holiday time can mean cutting back on sleep as we strive to fit everything in. Avoid this temptation and maintain your sleep routine as much as possible. This will enable you to minimize stress, maximize your productivity, and maintain good judgment. Burning the candle at both ends only makes us unproductive as we waste time making errors and being indecisive.

Look for ways to save yourself time and effort. Order preprinted holiday cards or have your teenager create mailing labels for you. Have your gifts wrapped by the store or at the charity booth at the mall to save time and do a good deed. Order your holiday pies from the local bakery, or do your shopping online.

As you work to accomplish what you need to, consider what tasks you can delegate. Don't pass up any offers of help, and if others don't offer to help, ask them to! If you can, hire some outside help for house cleaning or other chores you don't need to do yourself. Remember that the holidays are for having fun, so be sure to allow time for relaxation.

## **Recognizing and Preventing Stressors (cont.)**

In addition to time, the other limited resource during the holidays is money. Set and stick to a budget for the holidays. Involve the family and be creative. Half the enjoyment of handmade gifts and decorations is in the making. Keep the holiday spirit in mind and avoid competitive gift-giving. Discuss giving only to the children, selecting one person to buy a gift for, or setting a spending limit.

Periodically remind yourself of your intention for the holiday season, and remember what's most important. Don't let memories of the past, good or bad, cast a shadow on this year's celebration. Stay focused on today and this year. Try not to let others' agendas derail you. Set boundaries with family members, if necessary.

Finally, don't get caught up in trying to create perfect holiday experience – for yourself or your family. No one will remember every detail or even notice them. Relax and have a good time, and others around you will follow suit.

## Learning to Approach Food and Eating Differently

Holidays are notorious for weight gain, although the numbers are often overstated. The average weight gain is only a little over a pound, not the five plus we usually hear. While that's good news, there's still a problem: most people never lose the weight. Over the years this accumulates to more than ten pounds every decade! Let's look at ways we can avoid the gain altogether.

### Parties and Events

Food is large part of every celebration, and holidays are no exception. Have you ever come home from a party feeling as if you had too much to eat or drink? Ever felt bad even the next day?

This year make different choices by behaving in new ways. First, don't go to parties or events overly hungry. While it's a good idea to eat lighter during the day you have an evening event, have a low calorie snack just before you leave. This will take the edge off your hunger, enabling you to be more selective with your food choices.

At a buffet, look to see what's being served. If you can have the food anytime, pass it up for something special that's only served at holiday time or made just for that event. To control portions, use a small plate and a tall, narrow glass. Studies show people consume less food and beverage when they do. If you're concerned about calories, watch your alcohol intake, and alternate between alcoholic beverages and non-alcoholic drinks. This strategy is also effective for managing moods because alcohol's depressant effects can impede judgment and make stress more difficult to handle. Be aware of appetizers and finger foods as we can easily lose track of what we've eaten, and they typically pack a lot of fat and calories into a tiny package.

Make your focus be on family and friends, rather than the food and drink. Stand away from the food, and set a goal to speak to everyone at the event, if possible. See how many new people you can meet or who you can get to know better.

## Learning to Approach Food and Eating Differently (cont.)

### Preparing Holiday Food

For many, holiday traditions include special foods. These can successfully be accommodated in a healthy holiday with some minor behavior changes. For example, studies show that people eat less overall when the amount of food served and/or the variety of foods offered are less. So, rather than prepare food to last for several meals, make smaller quantities. This will result not only in less being eaten at the holiday meal, but will also minimize any leftovers, enabling you and your family to return to your regular diet sooner. In addition, minimize the variety of foods you make by rotating favorite foods from year to year. For instance, have the family select only one or two of their favorite Christmas cookies for you to make that year.

There are many ways to successfully lighten your holiday menu and favorite foods. Use low fat sour cream, mayonnaise, and cheese in your recipes. Reduce the amount of nuts needed by toasting them to enhance the flavor. Substitute applesauce for oil in holiday fruit breads and cakes. Cut the sugar in baked goods by 25% without any noticeable change. Review your holiday menu and eliminate non-essentials such as rolls. Open your meal with a fruit cup or broth-based soup rather than a creamy soup or other heavy dish. Serve butter, dressings, and sauces on the side. Offer a holiday drink before dinner, but skip the appetizers.

Pay attention while you're preparing your food. Don't taste the food as you prepare it. Rather than lick the bowl or spoon, take them immediately to the sink, and run water on them. Brush your teeth beforehand or chew gum to help you with these strategies.

## Learning to Approach Food and Eating Differently (cont.)

### Eating During the Holidays

Food seems to be everywhere during the holidays – on desks and in the break room at work, on store counters, as free samples at the supermarket, and at church events. Stay conscious of everything you put in your mouth. Strive to maintain your regular diet as much as possible, especially on days when you don't have a holiday party or event. Don't give up snacking, but do keep them healthy, and be sure to eat at least five servings of fruit and vegetables a day.

During holiday meals, borrow some strategies from the party suggestions discussed previously. Avoid being overly hungry. Focus on the special holiday foods rather than the everyday items, unless it's a fruit or vegetable. Take small servings, as you'll have a tendency to eat it once it's on your plate. You can always have more if you need to, and people love serving seconds at the holidays! Avoid wearing an elastic waistband. Wear a belt instead to monitor your sense of fullness. Choose to stop eating rather than expand the belt if it feels tight.

Many people prepare special foods for the holidays and may encourage or even pressure you to eat. There are several reasons people become "food pushers" during the holidays. It may be a loved one who has made your favorites and wants the pleasure of seeing you enjoy the holiday treats. It could simply be there is an excess of food that they want to have eaten. Or, it might be that they don't want to indulge alone, so they encourage you to eat along with them. Whatever the reason, you don't have to give in. Depending on the circumstances, you could simply decline, say you'll have some later, agree to take some home, or placate them by taking just a taste. Be sure to complement them on the appearance, and if appropriate, ask for the recipe. This lets them know you appreciate the effort, yet saves you from overeating.

Finally, don't use food to cope with stress, a real temptation given the abundance of both food and stress during the holidays! Extra food will not provide any lasting relief, but will leave you feeling sluggish in the short run while creating a new problem for you after the holidays.

## Staying Active During The Holidays

With the increased demands on us, it's easy to give up exercise during the holidays. Who has time for trips to the gym or exercise classes when there is shopping, decorating, mailing, baking, and so forth to accomplish? People intent on enjoying their holidays do! Actually, maintaining your exercise program is essential to getting the greatest pleasure from your holidays.

Given the hectic pace, be creative in your approach. Look for ways to modify your regular routine as necessary. Keep your work out gear in the car or at work. Take a walk during your child's piano lesson. Pull out the exercise videos you haven't done in years. Do half of the routine one day, and finish it the next.

No time to spend just for exercise? Try NEAT, non-exercise activity thermogenesis, to expend calories by building activity into your day. Stand rather than sit, and pace rather than stand. Return telephone calls on your cell phone while walking, ironing, or folding laundry. Park at a distance from the store, and make several trips to the car. Strive to take the stairs everywhere, and be less efficient at home to take the stairs more often.

Keep in mind that activity is an effective way to alleviate stress. Consider trying yoga, a wonderful relaxation technique. Besides the great physical benefits it affords, yoga harmonizes the body with the mind, enabling people to perform activities efficiently while enhancing overall satisfaction. Need something simpler? Take a brisk walk and spend quiet time alone or invite a loved one and talk out your stress. How about dancing? Music is a terrific mood enhancer, and the aerobic movement will energize you and release excess emotion after a stressful day.

This year give and request gifts that promote activity and wellness. Consider giving passes to a gym or fitness class, a book on hiking, or a meditation CD. How about giving a gift certificate to a sporting goods store or for a session with a personal trainer?

## **Staying Active During The Holidays (cont.)**

When planning your holiday activities, include those that get you and others moving. Set up a caroling event or tree-trimming party. When dividing the tasks among family members, choose to decorate or go shopping. Volunteer for a local charity wrapping gifts, delivering gift baskets, or serving food. Make your family outings and events active. Walk off your holiday dinner and enjoy the lights, go skating, or clear the living room for dancing.

## Calories Burned Vs. Calories Consumed

### Calories Burned in 30 Minutes – 150 Pound Person\*

Sitting/Reading/Writing	36
Standing	40
Washing Dishes/Ironing	77
Shopping	81
Doing Housework	99
Cooking	90
Dancing – slow ballroom	103
Stretching/Water Aerobics/Raking Lawn	135
Playing with Kids/Biking Leisurely	135
Making Love	144

Walking – 3 mph	148
Mopping	153
Walking – 4 mph	176
Gardening	184
Dancing – aerobic, ballet, modern	202
Shoveling Snow	207
Rearranging Furniture	225
Jogging/Stationary Bicycle Moderate	238
Using Elliptical Trainer	387
Running – 10 mph	612

\* People who weigh more will burn more calories.

Source: <http://www.healthstatus.com/cgi-bin/calc/calculator.cgi>

### Calories in Common Holiday Food

Beer – 12 oz.	139
Bridge Mix (candy) – 18 pieces	200
Brisket Pot Roast Style – 3 oz.	204
Cheese – 1” cube	55
Chips (Potato or Tortilla) – 1 oz.	150
Cookie, Iced Gingerbread	100
Dip – 1 Tbs.	75
Egg nog – ½ cup	171
Fudge – 1 small	70
Green Bean Casserole – ½ cup	225
Ham – 3 oz.	150
Mashed Potatoes – ½ cup	150

Mixed Nuts – ½ cup	440
Olives – 5 large	92
Pecan Pie – 1/8 of 9” pie	500
Potato Knishes – 1 oz.	64
Potato Latke – 1 small	59
Pumpkin Pie – 1/8 of 9” pie	316
Ritz Crackers – 5	88
Spice Bread – 3 oz. slice	245
Stuffing – ½ cup	180
Turkey, Light & Dark – 3 oz.	170
Whiskey Sour – 5.5 oz.	160
Wine – 4 oz.	90

Sources: <http://walking.about.com/library/cal/blchristmascalories.htm>

<http://www.fabulousfoods.com/holidays/hanukah/hanukah.html>

## Action Plan

*Begin by stating your intention for the holiday season. Then using the assessment and the information from the workshop, set goals and strategies for achieving your intention. Remember to consider each area: food, activity, and time and stress management.*

<b>My intention for this holiday season is:</b>	
<b>Goal #1</b>	
<b>Obstacles</b>	
<b>Strategies for overcoming</b>	
<b>Goal #2</b>	
<b>Obstacles</b>	
<b>Strategies for overcoming</b>	
<b>Goal #3</b>	
<b>Obstacles</b>	
<b>Strategies for overcoming</b>	

## Healthy Holidays Feedback

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Facilitator's Name:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. The workshop helped me assess my ability to have an enjoyable and healthy holiday season.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
2. The workshop offered practical and useful ideas for enhancing my enjoyment of the holidays.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
3. The workshop content was concise and well-organized.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
4. The presentation was engaging.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
5. The facilitator was effective.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
6. What I liked best was...					
7. My suggestions for next time are...					
8. I would recommend this workshop to ....					