

Fun Fact of the Week

10 Ways to Squeeze in a Workout During the Holidays*

By Sarah Winkler

From [Thanksgiving](#) to New Year's Day, some people can gain up to 5 to 7 pounds (2.26 to 3.17 kilograms). Even if you only gain 1 pound (0.4 kilograms) during the holiday season, the weight adds up and can reach 10 to 20 pounds (4.5 to 9 kilograms) over a decade [source: [Science Daily](#)].

The holiday season can make keeping to a consistent workout routine difficult; between the chilly temperatures, shorter daylight hours, travel to visit with family, [food](#)-oriented gatherings and frantic shopping schedules, squeezing in physical activity is tough. But staying active during the holidays can be easier and more fun than you might think. We've compiled a list of 10 easy ways to squeeze in a workout during the holidays that will surely keep you active and even boost your holiday spirit.



Chasing Santa through a field is a good way to increase your heart rate.

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10. Park Far Away

Parking lots are notoriously crowded during the holiday season. You could turn that congested parking lot into an opportunity to burn some [calories](#). If you're headed to the mall to do some holiday shopping, avoid those fiercely fought over prime parking spots and park far away from the entrance. If you park five minutes away from the mall and walk at a pace of 4 miles per hour (6.4 kilometers per hour), you could burn about 25 calories [source: [Health Discovery](#)]. Those calories definitely can add up after multiple mall visits to find perfect gifts for friends and family.

9. Lap the Mall

Before you head directly to the store where you always buy a sweater for your uncle, take a quickly paced, full lap around the mall. In addition to beating the cold temperatures outside, you'll get in some extra exercise and window shop while you're at it. You might even spot an alternative to that boring holiday sweater you usually purchase.

8. Play with the Kids

During the holiday season, you're likely to be around more small children than usual. Take advantage of having the little ones around, and try to feed off of their holiday excitement. Instead of being burdened by the extra responsibilities of having tiny tots around, play with your nieces and nephews. You can chase the active toddlers around the house or take the older kids on a stroll around the neighborhood to check out holiday decorations. You'll be squeezing in a workout during the manic holiday season, and it's likely that the kids will put you in the holiday spirit.



Soak up some of that childish energy from the kids.

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7. Workout Indoors

Working out can be difficult during the holidays for people who like to [exercise](#) outdoors. Taking a walk or going for a run might be next to impossible in freezing temperatures. Instead of being a couch potato while you're stuck indoors, come up with a workout you can do inside. Climb up and down the stairs in your house for a good cardio workout. Focus on weight training, Pilates, yoga or invest in some fitness videos to stay trim during the holiday season. You could even put some of these items on your gift wish list.

6. Winter Sports

Some sports were made for the holiday season. A perfect way to bond with family and get a workout could be a trip to the ice rink. For every hour you ice skate, you can burn about 600 [calories](#), the same number of calories burned when you run 5 miles (8 kilometers) [source: [Active](#)]. Ice skating is an excellent form of exercise for people of all ages; the kids will love sliding around on the ice, and older people will appreciate skating's low impact on the joints and its calorie burning benefits. Along with these health benefits, bundling up in the crisp winter air to take to the ice is sure to put you in the holiday spirit.



Go ice skating with the family.

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5. Set Goals

The holidays can get so busy and hectic that an important activity such as exercise might simply fall to the wayside. To avoid forgetting about workouts, make exercise appointments on your calendar, and keep these appointments just as you would any other.

Be realistic with your exercise goals, and be consistent. For example, if you're having trouble getting motivated, commit to at least 10 minutes of exercise per day. A 10-minute commitment may not seem like much, but it will help you start a routine. You also could commit to walking 1 mile (1.6 kilometers) or working out for 10 minutes for every \$10 you spend on holiday shopping.

4. Work Out with Family

Although it might seem difficult to take time to work out while you're surrounded by family, take advantage of having the whole gang around and plan some holiday-related [exercise](#) activities. For example, take your family on a walk through a park decked out in holiday lights and decorations. Or go on walk and sing carols through the neighborhood. Afterward, you could even reward you and yours with some coffee or hot [chocolate](#).



Take a walk around the block and check out the holiday decorations.

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3. Wear a Pedometer

It's important to keep track of how active you are during the holidays. Chances are that when it's chilly and dark outside as you're leaving the office, you're going to be less active than when it's warm and sunny when you head home from work. To make sure you're staying active during the winter season, wear a pedometer to keep track of how much you're moving around.

A general rule of thumb is that you should walk about 10,000 steps daily -- about 5 miles (8 kilometers) -- to maintain a good level of fitness. By wearing a pedometer, you'll be able to check if you're maintaining your baseline of fitness and adjust if you're not. If you find you're falling behind, take the stairs at the office instead of riding the elevator or park a few blocks away from the restaurant if you're meeting your friends for a holiday meal.

2. Sign Up for a Race

Many towns and cities host annual holiday events such as Turkey Trots or Jingle Bell Runs. These "fun run" races are usually family-oriented and not too intense but still very good ways to stay in shape during the holiday season.

Sign up for these events well in advance so that you can stay committed to working out in order to prepare for the event. You can incorporate daily exercise into your everyday holiday season routine. Holiday-themed races are the perfect way for the whole family to stay in shape and anticipate the season.



The annual Santa Dash in Liverpool, UK

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1. Stay Active While Traveling

If you're traveling out of town to visit friends and family during the holidays, it might be difficult to maintain your usual workout schedule. There are some things you can do, however, to squeeze in a workout on the go. In the airport, walk around the terminals in between flights.

When booking a hotel, check out if they have a pool, fitness center or in-room exercise equipment. You can also ask if your gym membership extends to other gyms in your family's town. Additionally, let your family know that you intend to exercise during your visit. They'll hold you accountable for your goals.

*<https://recipes.howstuffworks.com/menus/10-ways-to-workout-during-holidays.htm>