



'All I want for Christmas is...a fit and healthy body!'

Being active over the Christmas period

The Christmas Holidays are fast approaching a period full of enjoyment with families and friends.

The festive season, with its break of regular routine, means that people often find themselves spending a lot of time sedentary and indulging in their favourite holiday's treats. Many tend to lose track of their usual healthy diets, eat more and more often, as well as having more sugary snacks and drinks. Studies show that the majority of people tend to gain some additional weight during the holiday season through to the New Year celebrations. Excessive eating and drinking is claimed to be the main cause for additional weight gain, but it is also due to the lack of physical activity.

A lot of individuals tend to set aside their fitness routines during the holidays. However, given that one of the biggest barriers to exercise is lack of time, a break from the usual routine can provide the ideal opportunity to begin or maintain physical activity. Staying active over Christmas not only reduces your chances of gaining weight, it also helps energise you, reduces stress and gives you a break.

You can still enjoy the holidays while keeping fit and healthy at the same time. This article looks at what's available in Guernsey, and offers a few suggestions and tips.

Why Be Physically Active?

Physical activity is defined as any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that require energy expenditure. Being physically active is a fundamental part of healthy lifestyle and has a range of benefits.

There are countless ways you can be physically active and therefore there is something which everyone can enjoy. The majority of people want to be physically active or be involved in more but they often put it off and say they will start next week or next month. In this Christmas period most assume there is no point in starting until the New Year. The guilty feeling people get after the holiday season sees gyms and fitness centres rise in user rates with a flock of new members acting on their New Year resolutions.

It is recommended that throughout the whole year people should maintain a good level of physical activity. It's important to find ways to stay active that suit you and that you can incorporate into your weekly routines. The festive break is an ideal period to explore new ways to be active and discover activities you have not tried before or haven't done for a while.



What does Guernsey have to offer?

Guernsey has a wide variety of choice and opportunity to be physically active all year round. Being such a small Island nowhere is too far away so, unlike in the UK, travel distance is not so much of a barrier.



- Guernsey offers a variety of different sport clubs/leagues, fitness classes and gym facilities. Most of these are available all year round and there is plenty of information online about them (on Facebook and through Government/non-Government websites).
- There are different halls and leisure spaces that can be hired out to provide a space for physical activity of your choice with friends and family. A few spaces where this can be done are; *Beau Sejour hall (and squash courts), Styx community centre, Rue Mainguy (Scout centre), Rohais Badminton centre courts, St Sampson's School (hall, 3G pitches and swimming pool), Indoor Cricket Centre Spaces and KGV 4G pitches to name a few.*
- The Friquet garden centre hosts an ice-skating rink open from the 1st-31st of December (tickets and information can be found here: <https://www.iceskateguernsey.com/>).

However, many of the options above do require a cost. Fortunately, Guernsey does have a lot of safe outdoor spaces/places. It does everyone good to get off the sofa and embrace the colder weather conditions. All you need is to get your hat, gloves and coat on. You can head down to one of the many beaches or parks the Island has on offer. You can get on your bike and head up to the fairy ring or if you find a sheltered enough spot play some Frisbee or Football. There are many good walks and trails round the Island such as the cliffs on the south coast and the reservoir in St. Saviour's. If you're feeling brave you could get involved in the boxing day swim down at Cobo!

If you can't drag yourself or anyone else outside, there are some indoor alternatives to slumping on the sofa all day. These options include:

- There are many different active video games now from Wii consoles to Xbox Kinetic and new VR technologies which all provide an entertaining option where you're not sitting still.
- Trying some of the latest exercise DVDs or do Yoga/Zumba in your living room or open space.
- Designing your own home workouts which you do without any gym equipment necessarily. There are many helpful videos to get you started on YouTube and apps which can give you pointers and motivation.
- There is always a good old-fashioned game of Twister or Charades!

10 tips for the



Christmas period

1. Don't skip meals - skip breakfast, but overindulge later on. You could add festive fruits, such as cranberries, dates and figs to your breakfast, to contribute towards your recommended five portions of fruit and vegetables a day. If you have a big meal later, eat a healthy meal earlier, as if you go most of the day without eating you will be more likely to overeat and choose unhealthy options.
2. Choose wisely - If you plan to indulge, choose items that are only prepared on these special occasions and try to limit the portion. Try to eat some fruit and vegetables, as these will help you feel full and keep you from over eating the less healthy options. Select the treats that you eat sensibly. You should choose something that you can only enjoy during the holiday season and not something that is readily available all the time. Try choosing nibbles like pretzels, roasted chestnuts, unsalted nuts, dried fruits or satsumas instead of crisps and chocolate.
3. Don't have snacks readily available - "out of sight, out of mind" is a good policy. If treats are accessible to you, it makes you more likely to choose them. Limiting treats and unhealthy leftovers at home is a great way to maintain your weight during the holidays.
4. Eat less and more often - Distribute your meals evenly throughout the day, and do not eat everything at once. Instead of having 2 enormous meals, have 5 small ones as it keeps your metabolism working and helps to control blood sugar. Eat your dinner earlier and have a nice walk before going to bed.
5. Pay attention – It is good to eat slowly and listen to your hunger cues. If you are truly not hungry, avoid second helpings to avoid bloating.
6. Limit Liquid calories - Drink with moderation. To help keep your liquid calories in check, alternate water and an alcoholic or sweetened beverage. Chose drinks you can sip slowly so you don't end up having too much.
7. Prioritise your workouts - Try to do them early in the morning while everyone else is still sleeping. Your workouts don't need to be long to be beneficial.
8. Get out of the house - Make the holidays a family affair and plan outdoor activities where everyone is involved.

9. Be inventive and creative with physical activities - With cooler temperatures outside, it might be more difficult to get outside and be active. Try to incorporate time with family and friends by looking into an activity you can all enjoy.

10. Set Realistic Goals - You should set realistic exercise objectives. Aim for at least half an hour per day and you will be very happy when you will achieve that. If you plan one hour or more and not achieve it, you will only end up disappointed.

'I'm going to start in the new year...'

For those of us who fully intend to shelve health and fitness resolutions until the New Year, make sure:

- **Be realistic** - There's no point starting on the 1st January if you're going to be tired out and have lots of left-over Quality Streets that you want to finish. When you start make sure what you are choosing to do is achievable and maintainable.

- **Set goals** – Take time to think about and formulate your health and fitness goals, ensuring they are challenging but realistic. Be positive and confident about your ability to achieve them. Make sure you have short-term goals that can help you work towards your long-term target as this can make it seem less daunting.

- **Be patient** - Fitness and weight loss don't happen overnight. That's why it is important to have a time frame for your goal. Set short- term goals to work towards on the way to your overall target - these give you something more immediate to aim for, and help you build confidence and faith in yourself, plus make the end goal not seem so daunting.

- **Keep track** - Keep a food and/or exercise diary to monitor your progress and help motivate you to stay focused on your goals.

