

Holiday Hacks for a Happier, Healthier Season

With the holidays officially here, Ana Cabán shows us a few ways to stave off those unhealthy habits and maintain a joyful season ahead!

It's official! Both Halloween and Thanksgiving have come and gone so now we are in full holiday swing. While this is a fun and exciting (and sometimes stressful) time of year, it's also a time when we often let ourselves – and our workouts – go by the wayside. Tempting treats and cocktails surround us for party after party. With all this busyness of the season, it's easy to fall out of your routine and lose sight of yourself and your health. That being said, in order to keep your holidays healthy and happy, we've come up with 7 simple “holiday hacks” for your body, mind and spirit. Here they are:

1. Sleep before you eat

With all the festivities around the holiday season, we may stay up later than our usual bedtime. However, when we don't sleep enough, we actually munch more. How much more? People who don't get enough sleep tend to eat an additional 385 calories a day. Sadly, they are not usually the healthiest calories. In fact, they tend to do avoid protein and choose more fat. So make sure to get a good eight hours of sleep per night, and you'll feel less hungry!

2. BYO-healthy dish

As tasty as all of the treats around the holiday table are, they are typically loaded with fat, sodium or sugar. Opt to bring something healthy and yummy to share at parties like pumpkin seeds or butternut squash. Who knows? Your “healthy” treat may even be the hit of the party!

3. Follow the three-bite rule

We know how easy to overeat during the holidays. That’s why I live by my three-bite rule. The first bite of that yummy seasonal dish wakes up the taste buds. Sadly, however, the pleasure diminishes with every subsequent bite. So opt for only three enjoyable bites and move on to the next dish.

4. Hydrate, Baby!

Liquid calories are sneaky, and consuming alcohol is dehydrating. So make sure to drink up! Water, that is. Chase each cocktail with an 8-ounce glass of water. It will help you feel fuller and stave off taking too much alcohol. Plus, you can cut down on sugar and carbs by making club soda, or water, and fresh fruit your mixer, instead of sugary mixes.

5. Workout post pig out

There’s nothing like a post-holiday workout! Sure, the first few minutes may seem torturous as you get back into the groove. But beyond that, they can be invigorating, energizing and inspiring. So make sure to hit the mat, or the reformer, the day after your holiday festivities!

6. Have a cup o’ (detox) tea

You can give your gut a break with a detox tea. Ginger root, green tea, dandelion root and red clover are just a few that have been known to give the tummy a boost.

7. Meditate

Contrary to popular belief, mediation is not about tuning out and neglecting the rest of the world. It's actually about tuning in, to your breath, to your body, to your mind. What a perfect thing to do during this busy, (or any), time of year. Here are three simple steps that I use to get zen, in only 10 minutes.

1. Sit up straight and tall. Scan from the top to the bottom of your body, making sure that each part is relaxed (eyes, cheeks, mouth, neck, etc. to your toes).
2. Become aware of your breath moving in and out. Your mind will wander, and that's totally okay. The idea is to continually bring your focus back to your breath each time your thoughts travel away from it. Inhale deeply and exhale deeply, maintaining good, supported (but not tense) posture.
3. As time goes on you will find that your mind wanders less frequently and for shorter periods of time. You will become skilled at tuning back in to your breath. Start this practice for a few minutes and increase to 10 minutes, or longer. See how in tune with your mind and your body you become. It's really that simple!



Those are just a few holiday hacks. If you have your own, please share them in the comments or on the official [Peak Pilates® Facebook](#) page!

Learn more about Ana's brand new 21-Day Pilates Body program [here](#) at the [DailyOm.com](#).

This article was contributed by Ana Cabán. As one of America's leading fitness trainers, Ana has sold over 4,000,000 of her award-winning bilingual fitness DVDs. Touted "a star Pilates instructor" by InStyle magazine, she also regularly appears as the go-to fitness & lifestyle expert in magazines including Health, Fitness, Pilates Style, Latina and O Magazine.