

Leyla Weighs In: Don't let the Holidays derail your healthy eating habits

Sometimes the best way to stick to a diet plan is to break all the rules. Yes, that's just what I said. The holidays are a perfect time to help you stick to your diet. You just have to follow this simple rule: For that particular holiday meal or occasion, you will eat whatever you like. The very next day, you get right back on your program as if nothing ever happened. **No guilt or remorse permitted.**

Since you will be "allowed" to eat these special occasion foods (holiday goose, pumpkin pie, Christmas cookies, etc.), you won't feel deprived. Feeling deprived is what increases the reward value of the food you're missing. This strategy takes care of that.

Makes sense, right? We also do away with *this* negative self-talk: "I just completely blew my diet so I might as well continue to gorge." You're not blowing it. You're having a holiday meal. That's all. Discard the drama.

If you are hosting, have your guests bring Tupperware or any other suitable container so they can carry away all those tempting goodies. Make sure every last nibble goes out the door. **Out of sight, out of mind!** This way, your sumptuous holiday meal doesn't turn into an all weekend feast.

Are you receiving a lot of sweet treats as gifts (chocolates, fruit cake, etc.)? You don't have to eat them to show your love and appreciation. Pay it forward. Make donations to your local food bank or soup kitchen. They will really appreciate it, and your waistline will thank you too!

Now go enjoy your holiday meals and treats, and *the very next day, get right back on program.* Breaking the rules on occasion is good for the soul.

Remember that the *perfect* is the enemy of the *good*. Life is not all or nothing. Most importantly, enjoy these special times with your loved ones. Savor your time together and have fun!

Wishing you a Joyful Holiday Season!