

Enjoy a guilt-free Christmas

Don't wait until the New Year to make a change

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IT'S that time of year again: holiday parties are here and, with them, a plethora of sweets, treats and tipples.

And while the merriment lasts it's a blast - that is, of course, until the reality of the New Year and the expanding waistline hits.

How do North Vancouver residents feel about the festivities in relation to their fitness? Are they able to enjoy a guilt-free Christmas?

According to a press release, new research carried out by Ipsos Reid and commissioned by Fitness Town, North Vancouver has revealed that 62 per cent of North Vancouver residents suffer from guilt around eating too much during the holidays.

Luckily, all this worry means that North Vancouver residents are very motivated to get fit, with the same percentage (62 per cent) claiming they plan to get fit after the holidays.

It may come as no surprise that, in terms of fitness rankings, 53 per cent of North Vancouver residents claim to participate in fitness or exercise activities on a regular or daily basis, known as active or competitor fitness mind states.

Which cities are the fittest in the Lower Mainland and what percentage of residents claim to be fit and active?

The results are as follows, according to the release: Vancouver, 70 per cent; North Vancouver, 64 per cent; Richmond, 58 per cent; Burnaby, 54 per cent; Tri-Cities, 52 per cent; Surrey, 51 per cent; and, Langley, 43 per cent.

People see the holidays as a green card to let loose then deal with their fitness woes in January, says Dai Manuel, chief operating officer of Fitness Town. If we do this, we're bound to feel bad over the holiday period. But if you incorporate simple activities into your lifestyle before the festivities start, it'll help balance out the guilty pleasures. It's not rocket science but it does require some planning and will power.

Manuel offers the following tips to ensure community members enjoy a guilt-free Christmas.

? Resolve not to set resolutions.

Less than seven per cent of Vancouverites kept a fitness-focused New Year's resolution last year. Resolutions are there to be broken, which can leave you feeling demotivated and frustrated early in the New Year.

So don't set them. Focus on changing your lifestyle gradually instead.

? Start today. Why put it off? Don't put yourself through a mad panic and rush to the gym on Jan. 1. If you set yourself some short, simple workouts before and during the festive season, you'll feel better and balanced afterwards.

? Be realistic. What do you enjoy doing most?

Is it walking the dog, using weights or a functional trainer at home?

Set yourself realistic goals, stick to them and slowly raise the intensity of your activity sessions.

Instead of setting your goal to lose weight, which can be tough at this time of year, why not just try and maintain it?

That's more realistic and encouraging when achieved.

? Get into the right mind state.

Make smart choices about what you're eating, drinking and how you're exercising. Make sure you own those decisions and be preventative, not reactive.

? Be accountable. Whether you choose to train with someone or start a fitness plan that you post on your fridge so you're reminded of it every day, make sure you're accountable for what you're doing. You're more likely to stick to the schedule that way.

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