

BLUE ZONES

“Health is the greatest possession” – Lao Tzu

Blue Zones project tips to avoid holiday weight gain

Dave Osborn Naples Daily News
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According to a 2016 study published in the New England Journal of Medicine, the average American’s weight increases by 0.4 percent over Christmas and 0.2 percent over Thanksgiving. That may not sound like a lot, but the reality is that the holidays probably account for much of a person’s annual weight gain over the course of a lifetime.

The abundance of calorie-rich foods, parties, overeating, and sedentary behavior all have a part to play in this seemingly insurmountable obstacle to good health during the holidays. The good news is, it doesn’t mean we are destined to see a bigger number when we step on the scale in January.

Here are some Blue Zones Project tips that include Power 9 (principles shared by the longest-lived people in the world) strategies to help keep the end-of-year weight gain at bay.

Join the Maintain Don’t Gain Holiday Challenge

There is strength in numbers when it comes to overcoming any challenge. Blue Zones Project is holding a community-wide, 7-week challenge that begins on November 20th to help keep people motivated and fit throughout the holiday season. The goal is for you or your team to maintain your weight within two pounds per person. To register, visit MaintainDontGainBZP.Eventbrite.com.

Move naturally

Find ways to incorporate more movement throughout the day. Choose to park farther away at the store. With all the holiday shopping, this can add up to a lot of extra steps. Also, take advantage of your time off work by completing that gardening or landscaping project that



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you have been putting off. Or, enjoy the nice Fall weather with a simple stroll outside or bike ride.

80% rule

Hara Hachi Bu! This Okinawan term means to stop eating when you’re 80% full. Some helpful ways to accomplish this are to eat more slowly, focus on the food that you are eating rather than being distracted by your phone or a tv, and use smaller plates.

Right tribe

The people you spend the most amount of time with during the holidays will have a direct impact on your health habits. Choose to spend more time with

those who make that extra effort to make healthier choices. The Maintain Don’t Gain challenge is a great way to join hundreds of other health-minded people in our community.

Plant slant

Choose to fill your plate up with more fruits and vegetables first. By doing this, you will likely fill up on the healthy foods and will have little room to indulge in the not so good for you choices.

Participate in Blue Zones Project virtual well-being activities

Blue Zones Project has teamed up with well-being champions in our community to bring you free virtual activ-

ities that you can do right from your own home. There’s Yoga, Tai Chi, Pilates, and Fitness classes that you can sign up and practice at any time. Looking for a new plant slant recipe to try out? Look no further than our online smoothie making and cooking demonstrations. To register for our free virtual activities, visit BlueZonesProjectSWFL.Eventbrite.com.

Brought to Southwest Florida by NCH Healthcare System, in collaboration with Sharecare, Inc., Blue Zones Project is a vital part of Southwest Florida’s well-being improvement initiative that encourages changes in the community that lead to healthier options. For more information about Blue Zones Project Southwest Florida, visit southwestflorida.bluezonesproject.com

Online Power Nine activity of the week

As the holidays approach, people are more than worried about sticking to their healthy diets. People are busier than usual and cannot keep up with their exercise routine; and eating habits are thrown off by tempting sweets and calorie-rich dishes.

As you put together your Thanksgiving plans this week, we encourage you to find different ways to incorporate healthy choices throughout the holiday weekend. This may include signing up for a virtual turkey trot run or adding healthier ingredient substitutions to your grocery list for Thanksgiving dinner. Let us know the creative ways you are making healthier choices this Thanksgiving by commenting or by tagging us on Facebook @Blue Zones Project – Southwest Florida, or you can email us at bluezonesprojectswfl@sharecare.com to be entered in our prize drawing for a gift card from one of our Blue Zones Project Approved Restaurants.

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