*REPs Ambassador Louise Hazel shares her expert advice as we approach the season of eggnog, work Christmas parties and endless repeats of Home Alone on ITV2 (not that we are opposed to any of this, particularly Home Alone – except the third one).*

It can be tempting to over-indulge during the Christmas period, with endless Christmas parties and treats everywhere it can be hard to resist the temptations that are associated with the festive season. Research has shown that weight gained over the Christmas period is rarely lost throughout the year meaning a steady increase of weight gain year upon year. So how can we enjoy ourselves without piling on those extra pounds?

With two weeks to go, I wanted to give you my top tips to not only keeping trim over the festive season but getting a head-start going in to the New Year.

1.       **Set yourself a goal** (e.g. Drop a dress size by Christmas, Lose 2kg before Christmas)

Goal setting helps you to focus as it provides a reason to exercise.

a)      When you don’t feel like exercising repeat your goal three times in your head and you’ll be more likely to head out of the door.

b)      When it comes to weight loss you should aim to lose weight gradually, 0.5kg every week is steady progress. The quicker you lose weight the easier it is to pile back on.

**2.       Ditch the treadmill**

Long, steady exercise is good for general fitness, but you won’t achieve results quickly.

a)      For a quicker result you should opt for HIIT (High Intensity Interval Training), classes are available at most good gyms.

b)      If you want to lift, tone and sculpt those problem areas you should opt for resistance training such as free-weights or power-band training.

c)       If you seriously lacking in motivation, opt for a personal trainer. A fully qualified and professional personal trainer will hold valid qualifications and insurance. Always check they are REPs qualified before you start by visiting the REPs website.

**3.       Stay hydrated**

Poor hydration can lead to feelings of fatigue so if you are suffering from the night before it’s important that you rehydrate to assist kidney and liver function.

a)      Try to consume 2 litres of water daily.

b)      To beat a hangover drink 500ml of water and take 1000mg of vitamin C before bed.

**4.       Dessert or alcohol**

Sugar is the biggest contributor to weight gain, therefore it is important to moderate your intake if you are trying to lose weight.

a)      Choose between dessert or alcohol, never both

b)      Opt for non-sugary cocktails, try going to a vodka and soda water with a slice of lemon for a low-calorie tipple.

**5.       Don’t miss breakfast**

Skipping breakfast will inevitably lead to a drop in blood sugar levels during the day, which will often lead to cravings for sugary and fatty foods. Avoid the temptation by making breakfast a priority.

a)      Opt for a high protein low carbohydrate start to the day such as scrambled egg with smoked salmon on a slice of wholegrain/rye toast

b)      Alternatively, check out recipe ideas at [www.pinterest.com/thepodiumeffect](http://www.pinterest.com/thepodiumeffect) for an awesome Bircher muesli recipe.

c)       If you are in a hurry, opt for an apple, Greek/soy yoghurt with a handful of mixed nuts and dried fruit.

Good luck and remember a diet is a lifestyle; it’s not just for Christmas! If you have any Christmas diet or fitness tips I’d love to hear from you @louisehazel on Twitter!