

## LIFESTYLES WITH SYLVIA



Dear Friends,

Is anyone else having a hard time believing Thanksgiving 2009 has already come and gone? I know I am, but I do hope you all had as happy and healthy a holiday as we had in the Horowitz household.

So, how'd you do? For those of you who managed to control both your appetite and your caloric intake, well done—and extra points to those of you who made it to SRC on Thursday morning!

On the other hand, if temptation proved to be a bit stronger than you had expected, don't be too hard on yourself. Remember, making healthy tweaks to long-standing holiday traditions takes time. Even if you only made a few small changes to your Thanksgiving feast this year, you still have plenty to be proud of, and next year you're likely to see even more progress.

Overall though, no matter how high you piled your plate this Thanksgiving, the important thing to remember is you've made it over the first of the big holiday hurdles. Next stop, December, full of holiday parties and the sweets that go with them, not to mention the stress we all inevitably feel as we rush to wrap up the many goals we set out to accomplish in 2009.

Parties and sweets plus stress...when you stop and think about it, is it any wonder at all our waistlines start growing around this time each year? That's when the "lifestyle" portion of this monthly column really kicks in. After all, eating is much more than just a function of hand to mouth. Our feelings and surroundings, and most importantly our stress levels, all factor into what we choose to eat on a daily basis, and only by taking as much control of these variables as possible can we truly take control of what we put into our body.

So when the holiday season gets hectic and you start to feel your resolve to eat right slipping away, here are some tips to get you back on track:

***Take a deep breath.*** The holidays may be the most joyful time of year, but no one said they were easy. If you begin to feel overwhelmed, take a minute to just relax. Enjoy a cup of tea or hot water with lemon and remember what the holidays are really all about.

***Start making lists.*** There's lots to be done in the next few weeks, and a little organization really does go a long way. Plan in advance and you'll avoid the stress that goes along with scrambling at the last minute. Plus, a list is also a great psychological tool for staying positive—check off your tasks as you go and you will feel accomplished and ahead of the game each day.

**Reflect on this year and consider the next.** Take the time this month to think about what 2009 has meant to you, and begin to formulate some smart New Year's resolutions. Don't set yourself up to fail, either: when it comes to resolutions, we have a tendency to set our sights too high. Then, when we fall short of our expectations, we decide to bag the whole thing and just carry on as before. Instead, make this year's resolutions ambitious yet realistic and you may just be surprised by the results.

**Be smart about the season.** If you're determined to lose some weight after the holiday binge, your best bet is to avoid binging in the first place. To do so, create a sensible and systematic approach to your holiday eating. For example, make sure to show up at parties with some food in your stomach already so you won't be inclined to eat everything in sight. Also limit the amount of alcohol you consume as drinking leads to overeating. Having a hard time staying away from the buffet table? Try reading a section of the newspaper before you arrive so you can make interesting conversation your focus as opposed to the food.

**Get some exercise in every day.** Sure, regular exercise during the holiday season will help keep your waistline in check, but that's not the only reason to hit the gym. Exercise is also proven to reduce stress, anxiety and depression, three monsters that have a tendency to rear their ugly heads around the holidays. If you've never taken a yoga class, now would certainly be a good time to try one. Take it from me: just chanting "om" in a community setting goes a long way.

**Enjoy yourself.** Make up your mind this year to have the greatest holiday season ever. After all, when we feel like we're losing control we have a tendency to lose it all together, but when we make conscious decisions that are in our own best interest we truly become the masters of our own destinies.

Looking for some extra support this holiday season? Feel free to email me at [Sylviae9@aol.com](mailto:Sylviae9@aol.com) or reread my past columns at [www.southportracquetclub.com](http://www.southportracquetclub.com).

And remember, with every new day we are given the opportunity to renew and redo, so make the most of all that you have been given. Eat real, colorful and locally grown food and you'll enjoy the benefits of sound mind and body. Finally, make these reminders part of your New Year's resolutions and you will find yourself well on your way to controlling your weight and loving yourself more than ever.

From my family to yours, have a happy and healthy holiday season and may the coming of the New Year bring you all that you deserve.

Until next time, happy healthful eating.

*Sylvia*

*December 2009*