



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

**Have a Happy Healthy Holiday!**  
**Tips from YMCA Exercise and Nutrition Experts**  
**Help Everyone Feel Their Best This Winter**

With all the shopping, cooking, family visits, and parties, it's harder for people to make healthy choices during the holiday season. Luckily, two experts from the YMCA are here with tips to help everyone feel their best – even when life gets busy. Together, they've compiled a 7W "Wish List" of healthy habits to build over the holidays.

- **Walking** – Walking is one of the easiest ways to build more fitness into every day. Not only does it get your heart and other muscles working in a low-impact way, but being active outdoors is a proven stress reliever. Walk with friends and family, walk to run errands, or try a walking meditation to clear your head when life gets busy.
- **Water** – Staying hydrated helps prevent a false "hungry" sensation, and keeps your metabolism running efficiently. If you don't like the taste of water, try adding a packet of dried lemon crystals, or an herbal teabag for a touch of flavor.
- **Wait** – When eating, take a smaller portion than you might habitually, and wait after you finish to give the sensors in your stomach time to tell your brain that you're full.
- **Wine** – Alcohol high in calories, and it hijacks your metabolism, causing your body to store more fat. It also disrupts sleep patterns. The less you drink the better you'll feel.
- **Work up to the workout** – It's easy to get discouraged with a new health routine, especially if you look at your scale to measure success. Best to start small, with a daily walk, and gradually increase, adding cardio and strength training. This helps establish healthy long-term habits while giving yourself time to FEEL the benefits, even if you can't SEE results quite yet.
- **Warm ups** – Did your uber-active aunt challenge you to try Pickleball? Got a grandpa who is raring to race with you? Avoid injuries by warming up before any vigorous exercise. Do dynamic stretches (where you keep moving through the stretch) beforehand, and static stretches (where you hold a stretch for a few seconds) afterwards.
- **Whatabout this instead?** It's hard to go "cold turkey" especially around Thanksgiving! Instead, try to replace old habits with healthier choices. At a party, make your first three drinks seltzer, so there's less time and room in your stomach for alcohol. Swap out frying for roasting meats and veggies. Air-popped popcorn stands in nicely for potato chips. Take a walk with a friend instead of meeting up for a meal out. You're less likely to fall back into an old habit if you're doing something new that you enjoy.

**Meet the YMCA of Metropolitan Washington's Experts!**

- **Nutrition** -- Caroline Schmalz is the YMCA of Metropolitan Washington's Community Dietitian. She is a registered, licensed dietitian nutritionist providing nutrition counseling and disease prevention services to communities across the DMV.
- **Exercise** -- Keith Smith is an American College of Sports Medicine Certified Personal Trainer and a Road Runners Club of America Level 1 Run Coach, who, at the age of 41, has also completed 41 triathlons. Keith got into running later in life after neglecting his health for years while he had a desk job. He is now at YMCA Healthy Heart Ambassador and a Les Mills Body Pump instructor.

**YMCA of Metropolitan Washington**

**YMCA Anthony Bowen, Suite A, 1325 W Street N.W. / Anthony Bowen Way, Washington, D.C. 20009**