

**S. T. E. P. S.**  
Inc.  
Personal Fitness Training

# Fit Happens

## Weight, weight, don't tell me!



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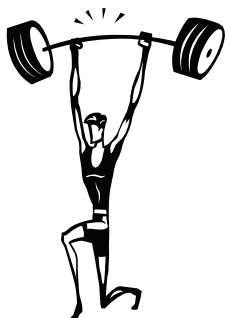
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When I took my oral exams for the Ph.D. process, one of the committee members inquired as to how I'd run my future gym. I began to rattle off a bunch of technical innovations that one only learns in academia, one of which was body fat testing - remember, this was the late '80s. That's when he threw me a curve ball by asking why would anyone want to know their body fat? Geez, I almost replied, because you have to know where you are before you can get to where you want to go. Ah, the naiveté of youth - though I was 36 at the time.

Since those early days, having since discovered the hard truth of that professor's wisdom, I have rarely measured the percent of fat of a new client. I almost never measure body-weight, either. In fact, I almost oppose taking such measurements on philosophical grounds: folks who come to a gym to get in shape are already out of shape and most don't want to know how much so. By the late 90's it occurred to me, and to almost all of them, that being fit did not directly correlate to body weight, size, or shape. Rather, it was a reference more to how they felt about how their body performed - with less or no pain, with more endurance/strength/flexibility - or simply just feeling better.

The only times I have offered to do measurements are when a woman, usually young but not exclusively so, would come in asking for help losing weight. Whether already lean, by appearance, or overly fat by appearance, my antennae go up. I would offer to measure them to demonstrate that their goals may need to be reconsidered in light of the objective criterion. In any case, short of a serious concern for their mental health, there is always a good argument for proper conditioning to enhance their conception of the true state of their body- what its actual level of fitness really is, not simply how it looks. I know too well that one can't affect how another feels about their body; that's the purview of mental health experts. All I can help with is how the body moves in space, and I don't even pretend to impose grace, fluidity, or other esoteric qualities (unless the person wants to take advantage of my many years of martial arts training to develop similar skills.) In other words, weight and body fat measurements serve a purpose but, I believe, don't address the problems most people have with their bodies, which are, barring a true medical condition, non-physical.

So, why do I bring these issues up at holiday time, when most gym-goers are already concerned with the excess calories they are apt to consume at functions laden with goodies? Because it's very easy for us trainers to get caught up in your getting caught up in these issues. For the most part, your trainer or your own research informs you that you should eat or not eat certain ways, not just at holiday time but all the time. Hopefully neither is imposing strict guidelines outside of which you are apt to spontaneously explode into a smattering of blubber and bony tissue. Nor are you feeling compelled to dislike yourself between functions or even workouts to the point that these become dreaded events. The fact is, and I think most trainers would agree, the holidays are a time to share in the festivities of the season with friends and families, and food just happens to be a part of that sharing. Therefore, enjoy and feast, and let your workouts keep you healthy, wealthy and wise.



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## Tips for surviving the holidays intact

### *Did you know?*

In the course of a lifetime, the resting heart will have pumped enough blood to fill 13 supertankers.

Compiled for you here are some nuggets (spell that any way you want) of wisdom - conventional or otherwise - from some of the trainers at STEPS. Or quite possibly from some of their children:

Raquel: "Do deep breathing exercises to help reduce holiday stress."

Irv: "Do 10-15 minutes of cardio every day or 30-60 minutes, 3 times per week."

Donna: "Don't deny yourself over the holidays but try not to overindulge either."

Dino: "Don't skip meals all day, trying to "save calories" for the big meal."

Bill Evans: "Never go to a party hungry."

Leanne: "Eat a yogurt before going to a holiday party."

Lara: "Have a light protein snack before a party."

Jen: "Don't drink eggnog."

Dawn: "Don't run on ice."

And my personal favorite...

Dee: "Use sugar-free Jello in your Jello shots!"

### Connecting the Dots

Type 2 diabetes is known to be associated with obesity, but it's not clear exactly why. Some explain it this way: obesity itself may not cause diabetes, but the behaviors that lead to weight gain -- taking in too many calories and burning too few -- probably do.

A few years ago, research from Duke's Richard Surwit, PhD, Mark Feinglos, MD, and colleagues showed that in a particular strain of mouse which is genetically predisposed to diabetes and obesity, those who ate a high-fat diet went on to develop diabetes, while those fed a lower-fat diet did not -- even when eating the same number of calories.

Now basic research from Duke's Sarah W. Stedman Nutrition & Metabolism Center is beginning to suggest why. Basically, an overload of the byproducts created during fat metabolism can damage the machinery that regulates insulin sensitivity and production. "We think that part of how insulin resistance comes about is that the muscle begins to inappropriately accumulate lipids and byproducts of lipid metabolism," says Stedman Center director Christopher Newgard, PhD.

The scientists are also starting to see that overloading on fat can lead to reduced secretion of insulin. "We can show in our cellular models that if you bombard insulin-secretion cells -- islet cells -- with elevated fat, for a couple of days for example, then you can see an impairment in insulin secretion." The researchers are currently working to pinpoint exactly which lipid-derived metabolites are the culprits, he says.

The researchers are also finding that an overload of all the nutrients, not just fats, is probably what's wrong with the typical American meal of a fast-food sandwich, fries, and a soda. Their work suggests that byproducts of metabolizing too much protein, for instance, can have bad effects as well.

— *DukeHealth.org*



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### Salt Treaty?

Some 150,000 lives could be saved annually if Americans cut sodium intake in half, according to a National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute study. The average daily sodium intake now is 4,000 milligrams — roughly twice the government's recommended amount for most people.

## Weights Management

For those of you who've kept up with our monthly newsletter, E3, you're already familiar with the research that continues to support the benefits of resistance training in addition to cardio. So if you're staying in town for the holidays, just keep it up with your trainer.

Now for those who are traveling. To avoid the sound of eye-rolling en masse, I'll stick to some creative exercises and skip the motivational speech.

The holidays are traditionally a time for kicking back, and only the hardest of the hardcore would even consider finding an out-of-town gym with a day rate. So as far as exercise equipment goes, improvisation is key. The "12 oz. curl", one of the most obvious (and revered) exercises, is always in fashion, and depending on local ordinances, portable. But the sun don't rise and set on the "gun show" so a little balance is required. Enter the triceps dip (not a tasty adornment for your Tostitos Scoop). You'll be using your chair for this one so you must first push away from the table - a key exercise that, when performed with proper timing, can preclude the need for that after dinner walk and, in some cases, CPR.

For many standard exercises, a Champaign bottle (or six-pack, depending on party affiliation) may be substituted for more traditional weights. The benefit being that, as more liquid motivation is consumed, not only does the weight get lighter, but you tend to introduce spontaneous instability.

If you can't find anything heavy enough to make a difference, I've got one word for you: fruitcake. Ok, simmer down, tough guy. I refer to that dreaded of all quasi-edible foodstuffs, that contradiction in terms that caused a squabble between the FDA and the Office of Homeland Security over whose jurisdiction it falls under. Most people politely accept the offending matter and discreetly dispose of it. Not you. You'll want to have contests with your more lively relatives as to who can put this shot the farthest, attempting to launch it straight back to Hell. The ultimate in re-gifting.

If, after all this ad lib training, you still manage to gain a few, take heart. There is still at least one obligatory feat of strength left. This is the pants zipper pull-up. Only one rep is required, but it's usually at maximal effort. And trust me kids, you don't want a spotter on this one.

### **How corny can you get?**

High fructose corn syrup is in almost every one of the more common processed foods as a sweetener. But, HFCS is generally made up of the same sugars as table sugar (sucrose) and honey: 50% glucose, 50% fructose. So for the most part, it acts on our bodies the same as sugar does, except that fructose does not get processed by insulin whereas glucose does. The problem with the war against HFCS is not that the calories are empty, as in most sugars, but that the bias against the fructose component is based on a lack of understanding that it's no different than the other sugars we consume. In other words, if you eat sugary foods, especially processed foods, you are consuming a lot of extra calories that you don't need. Hence you gain weight, regardless of sugar source.

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## STEPS FITNESS MENU

**Solo Training:** Traditional one-hour sessions of cardio, strength, stability, and flexibility: **12 Sessions.....\$730**

**Solo + Power Plate Training:**  
a one hour session that incorporates Whole body Vibration and other technologies to enhance bone density, muscle strength, power, Agility and balance. **12 Sessions.....\$790**

**Half Time:** You do cardio for 30-45 minutes, then work with a trainer for the strength, stability, and flexibility portions of your workout: **15 Sessions.....\$670**

**Duet:** You and a friend for one hour with your trainer: **12 Sessions.....\$890**

**Biometrics:** A successful approach to long-term weight management, balancing healthy eating with strength training. This 6-week program includes **19 sessions, menu plan, 2-month cardio membership and initial assessment...\$1250**



*\*Initial consultation required for all new clients.*