

Fitting in Fitness (And Your Pants this Holiday Season)

By: Patricia Tremblay, BS, NSCA-CPT
Original Publish Date: Sep 2006



Copyright © Ron Leishman * <http://ToonClips.com/1694>

The holidays are approaching, the waistline is expanding and the time to exercise is shrinking faster than cotton in a hot dryer. Juggling all of the responsibilities, obligations and social events of the holiday season make a circus performer's act appear amateurish.

For most women the holidays can be one of the most rewarding yet stressful times of the year. The focus is on doing for others and giving away much of the spare time that really was not much of a spare, but more like one of those donut tires in your trunk meant to last only 50 miles. The end result of all of this holiday commotion is that for a large number of women, exercise and diet becomes the lowest priority on the list. Typically women will put themselves last, this is just a time honored psychological fact.

Menu choices become one of the areas women begin to fail at during this time of the year. Do you pick the #1 combo, which has high fat and low nutrition? "I would like to order the "Stressed combo" please! Maybe as a chaser to the Stress meal you order up the emotional dessert of "Heart attack cake". The first statement I would like to make is the reason I have such clarity on this subject is because I have behaved in this very same manner. Of course as a trainer, this is really not the best way to gain a clients confidence, but maybe it has given better insight as to how to conquer the pitfalls of the holidays.

Eating behaviors are just one aspect of health and exercise is another. If the diet is hard to control, then what happens to exercise? Most of the time, exercise is what happens when you are doing laps at the mall looking for gifts or climbing a ladder to hang some Christmas tree lights. Yes, mall walking is promoted as exercise, but the reality is this is nothing more than an activity. The Mall wants you to think that strolling though the mall gazing at 50% off is exercise (although 50% does tend to elevate my heart rate), this type of walking does not produce enough of a calorie deficit to count for much in terms of energy expenditure.

Okay, we now see the big picture and next week is the company holiday party. The first thing that comes to mind is "I have nothing to wear", the second is "I have nothing that fits!" This is the beginning of the hunt for the Holiday disguise. That's right this is not an outfit that we need, oh no, no, no, this is like warfare! You need to find the right outfit that will assist you in hiding all of your recent transgressions while at the same time help you blend into the wallpaper like a lizard on stucco. Because, this is what women do best, we upsize and disguise. There is a certain department store in town that has the best fitting room mirrors in Volusia County. I swear you could be a size 50 and those mirrors will make you look like a size 2. This is all a part of the conspiracy to lull you into thinking that everything you ate and all of the aerobics classes you skipped did not cause any problem with your physique. Come on ladies, we have all done this! The designers must also have gotten hold of this psychological tool, because suddenly long

loose and flowing tops are hip. Then there is my favorite the “Empire” waistline, which essentially covers your entire body from the bust line on down. And we all see what happened to the skinny pant, I think it lasted a whole of 30 seconds in the real world.

While doing some research for this topic I Googled the psychology of clothes, I was amazed at the actual research that has been done on this subject. Here are some things I learned: Your appearance is a function of your personality and also genetically inherited. Physical appearance affects the environment that in turn affects your personality. Poor physical appearance leads to a lowered opinion by others, which leads to a lowered popularity. Lack of popularity undermines self-esteem and self-confidence. Is this news to any of you? Most women understand the connection to looking good and being treated well. The problem is that the answer to looking good becomes more about dressing well than taking care of our physical and emotional health. It is much easier and quicker to go to the mall and buy a disguise than it is to address the diet and fitness issues faced during the holiday.

Ladies, there are ways to manage the holidays without losing sight of your health and wellbeing. The following is a list of strategies that will help with your holiday survival plan. The first suggestion is to create a plan, make a list of obligations that you may face and write down how you plan on dealing with them. Second, create social and environmental control, this involves standing five miles away from the cookie table and rethinking social events as drinking events. Publicly announce your plan to stay on track, and create a support system to assist you in that plan. Be purposeful in your life, do things that are rewarding on a spiritual level and reward yourself not with food but with diamonds (hahaha), okay maybe just a spa treatment. Lastly, remember red may be a power color, but it makes most women look larger!

Patricia Tremblay is a NSCA certified personal trainer and owns Physiques By PT, a personal training company specializing in on site fitness programs

