

Health and fitness

GETTIN' BACK ON TRACK

Pueblo fitness professionals offer advice on beating the holiday binge

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The holidays have passed, and you've just spent the last couple of weeks snacking on sweets and stuffing your face with leftover turkey. You've also intermittently checked to see if the gym is, in fact, still erect.

All the good habits you've built up during 2017 have quickly vanished in a fit of holiday-feasting ecstasy.

You've buried the scale in the backyard, for fear of what it may read. The belt has been banished to the back of the closet. All the sweaters your grandmother bought you for Christmas are fitting a big snug.

But fear not: The Holiday binge only has to be temporary, and rebounding from the holidays is much simpler than expected.

So it's time to get back into the swing of things and bounce right back into your health regimen.

Don't wait 'til Monday

It's the day after New Year's Day, your routine is off-kilter and you don't feel as good about yourself as you did before the holidays.

You're ready to get back to the gym, to get back on a nutritious meal plan and back to feeling healthy and fit.

Now is not the time to procrastinate.

"Don't wait until Monday," said Johnna Dionisio, a personal trainer at Reps Union Avenue Sports

Gym and coach at Pueblo CrossFit. Both are located inside Reps at 110 S. Union Ave.

"Definitely don't beat yourself up over letting yourself binge and enjoy the holidays. But get right back into it," she said. "Start on a Wednesday. Find a plan, get a plan and, even if you're already doing something, just restart your plan."

If your plan was working be-

fore the holidays, jump back in or restart it. If you need a new plan, there are a few recommended things to think of first.

"Get a partner if you don't already have one, because accountability is huge," Dionisio said. "Try to find a gym, or a (CrossFit) box, or anything."

CrossFit is one way to help



Johnna Dionisio leads a class at Pueblo CrossFit.



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Dominic Musso works out at Pueblo CrossFit.

accountability, motivation and guidance for a smaller price tag than some personal-training programs.

"You're surrounded by like-minded people that are also going to hold you accountable," said Andy Watts, owner and coach at Pueblo CrossFit. "You don't have to worry about what you're going to do. That's where CrossFit is big, because you get told what to do. You get coached."

By building community with others, CrossFit can also help keep you motivated.

"You have people there constantly with you," Dionisio said. "You do form this group, family, community feel. If you don't come for two weeks, people will say, 'Hey, where were you?' It's definitely that accountability factor."

Ditch the dough

After a binge on cookies, fudge and various other sweets, it's important to get back to a whole-food nutrition plan.

This doesn't have to be an all-or-nothing approach, either. Bouncing back with your nutrition can be done in small increments and can be as simple as upping your water intake.

"Get your water back in check," Dionisio said. "Try to get a gallon of water a day, but if you're not drinking that now, gradually increase it by 10 ounces each day."

It's important not to go to extremes, either.

A balanced, steady approach is key to making healthy eating habits a sustainable process, rather than one that is temporary.

Give yourself a week to readjust to eating healthy, then make the changes lasting.

"Definitely cut out all sugar and try to stick to a plan for at least a week," Dionisio said. "Let your system cleanse itself and then get started on a diet. But don't look at it as a diet. Look at it as a way you're going to live."

Focus on whole foods such as lean proteins, vegetables, fruit and non-processed foods.

"Focus on real food," Dionisio said. "If you don't have to cook it, you probably shouldn't eat it. Stay on the outside of the aisles at the grocery store. Get fresh food and prep it right away."

The key to keeping your nutrition on track is to personalize your eating habits based on your schedule, needs and

tastes.

"Find something that works for you," Dionisio said. "Don't try something that somebody else tells you to do. Definitely get with a nutritionist or get to a point where something works for you and your body."

SMART goals

Staying motivated can help keep you on track when it comes to maintaining health. A key to staying motivated is setting goals.

"You should always have a goal to work toward," Dionisio said. "You'll be held accountable for that."

SMART is an acronym used by many health professionals, and it stands for Specific, Measurable, Action-oriented, Realistic and Time-oriented.

A goal should be specific, but weight shouldn't be an end-all, be-all. Focus on losing inches at your waist, improving body fat percentages or just overall

health.

"Check how your clothes are fitting, check how you're feeling when you wake up in the morning versus how you used to," Dionisio said. "Those are the things you should look for. Don't rely solely on the scale."

The goal does have to be measurable to some degree and must be action-oriented, meaning that you have to do something to get results.

Realistic goals are also important.

"If you've never worked out, you're not going to go into the gym and be lifting all kinds of weights or running half marathons," Dionisio said. "Start slow. You have to have a good foundation first. You can start with something real simple."

You must also give a time range to achieve a goal. Once you achieve that goal, you can reward yourself.

But don't do that with food.

"Buy yourself a new pair of shoes, or an outfit that you want," Dionisio said. "Or if you're working out with someone, have them buy you something if you reach your goal."

Consistency is key

No matter your goal, the only way to achieve success is by sticking to the game plan.

"Consistency is going to be everything," Dionisio said.

By holding yourself accountable, by finding a partner or support group like those offered at a CrossFit box and by tracking your progress, you can maintain consistency in your health regimen.

"Make goals for spring break, summer, next year," Dionisio said. "Take progress pictures. Write stuff down. Do a workout journal. Do fitness tests."

CrossFit, too, can help, as every exercise is measured and goals are set

day-to-day.

"It's quantifiable," Watts said. "That's what all our workouts are: they're quantifiable."

But at the same time, don't be too hard on yourself when you waver and fall off the wagon.

"Don't feel bad, don't beat yourself up," Dionisio said. "You're going to go through phases. There's nothing wrong with starting over."

Dionisio herself even struggles with motivation from time to time.

"I'm a personal trainer and I'm here all the time," she said. "There's times that even I don't feel like coming in (to work out). I even have to talk myself into it."

At the end of the day, bouncing back from the holiday binge is simple: "Just do something," Dionisio said.

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