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5 Ways to Get Back on Track After Thanksgiving

By Kirsten Ballard in [FOOD & NUTRITION](#)

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[Thanksgiving](#) break is a magical time of food, football and fun. After you've gorged on casserole and slept off the turkey coma, it's easy to wallow in the fridge of leftovers and elastic pants. But it's important to get back on track with healthy eating after the day of splurging and stuffing, especially before the stress of finals hits you. Getting back on track is easy with these five simple steps.



1. Remember Your Goals

After stuffing your face for a few days at home, it can be easy to throw in the towel and forget about your health goals for the remainder of the semester. But just because you indulged doesn't mean it's impossible to get back on track!

After you get back to school after Thanksgiving, make a list of small, manageable health goals for the next week ahead. Don't pressure yourself into upping your gym routine to impossible heights—the little efforts count too. For example, pledge that you'll nix dessert for five days out of the next week, or that you'll do an extra 10 minutes of cardio three days of the next week.

"For me, it's about not losing sight of your goals during the holiday season," says Nikki Stoudt, a junior at North Carolina State University. That way, you have no regrets and no problems getting back your motivation. So take your holiday with no self-hate, and remember that it's never too late to get back into the game.

2. Portion Your Leftovers

Of course you don't want to turn down the leftovers your mom is sending you back to school with—you can't say no to Aunt Jenny's pumpkin pie. But it's important to portion out your leftovers.

Separate the food into meal- or snack-sized containers so you aren't tempted to eat all of it in one sitting. Consider using this [plate method](#) while planning out meals to keep your portion sizes are in

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check: fill one half of your plate with veggies, one fourth with lean protein (like turkey) and one fourth with a healthy carbohydrate. Also, only bring three or four meals back to school with you instead of an entire fridge-full.



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5. Danishrie Dooze

After a hearty diet of carbs, one of the easiest ways to cut back on calories is to eliminate excess drinking. One beer has 154 calories—which is basically half a slice of pumpkin pie (323 calories for a full slice). Cutting out drinking when you first return to school is a great way to rebalance your caloric intake and avoid weight gain. It will also keep you from feeling sluggish, giving you the energy to recharge and hit the gym (or the library, since finals are creeping up).

If you do end up drinking, check out our list of the [10 highest- and lowest-calorie drinks](#) so that you can make healthier choices and know what to watch out for.

4. Detox

It's easy to only want to come back to school armed with pie, but make sure to bring back greens, too. Salad, kale, broccoli or whatever else you enjoy are great options. After a carb overload, load up on veggies and fruits and cut back on carbs and sweets and get out of the food coma rut. Swap out fruit juices and sugary drinks for water, and make sure you're drinking plenty of it.

Cutting salt from your diet will definitely help fight the bulge, so the more you can prepare your own meals instead of dining out, the better off you'll be. Also, try to add foods high in potassium into your diet. They'll flush out excess sodium, helping you to flatten your stomach. Bananas are a great source of potassium. Mix them into smoothies, yogurt or oatmeal for a healthy meal or snack.

5. Accept The Holiday

Don't spend the weeks between Thanksgiving and Christmas beating yourself up. Let it go. You indulged, you enjoyed—and it's okay. Getting back on track isn't any easier if you're mad at yourself. You need to think back on Thanksgiving and smile, but then prepare yourself to make adjustments to return to a healthy diet and lifestyle.

Once you get back on track, it'll be easy to phase into your normal diet and lifestyle. It's not a bad time to get a head start on [New Year's](#) resolutions and [get to the gym](#) after Thanksgiving. Get back on a balanced meal schedule and sleep schedule before finals and just be thankful that winter break is

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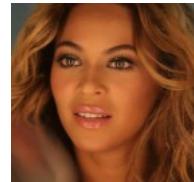
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