Simple Ways to Burn Calories during the Holidays

These everyday tasks burn more calories than one might think

From Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield

As the holidays approach and the temperatures continue to drop, it may be difficult to maintain a regular exercise routine and healthy eating habits. Recent studies show that the average weight gain over the holidays is anywhere from one pound to more than five pounds. Studies also show that most people do not lose that weight once the holiday season comes to a close.

This means keeping an active exercise routine, healthy eating, and eating in moderation during the holidays is essential in maintaining both your overall health and your waistline. Although it can be increasingly difficult to find time to get to the gym in the midst of holiday shopping, cooking, decorating, and entertainment, a Harvard Medical School study shows these common holiday activities are also great ways to burn excess calories:

Shoveling snow:
Shoveling can burn approximately 446 calories for every hour of work. Even using a snow blower can still burn 337 calories each hour.

Cutting down a Christmas tree:
Going out to the Christmas tree farm and cutting down your own tree can burn nearly 600 calories per hour.

Decorating a Christmas tree:
Not only is decorating your Christmas tree a fun way to spend time with your family, you can burn approximately 170 calories in just one hour of decorating.

Hanging Christmas lights outdoors:
Inspire your neighbors with your holiday spirit – outdoor work on your home can burn 372 calories an hour.

Sledding:
Taking your family sledding is a fun way to enjoy the winter weather. This family favorite activity can burn 520 calories an hour.

Ice-Skating:
Another traditional winter activity, ice-skating is an entertaining and easy way to burn 520 calories an hour.

Holiday shopping:
For every hour of grocery shopping with a cart, you can burn 260 calories, and just standing in line at the mall for 30 minutes burns 47 calories.

Gift Wrapping:
Once you've finished your holiday shopping, putting the finishing touches on those gifts before placing them under the tree can burn nearly 100 calories for each hour spent wrapping.

Cleaning:
Cleaning up after all of the holiday parties and activities might be the most dreaded of all of these activities, but knowing you are burning more than 300 calories for every hour of cleaning might make this chore a little bit more rewarding.

Although these activities are great calorie-burners, it's still important to exercise regularly and maintain healthy eating habits. If you want additional tools to manage your health, visit Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield's website: *Wellmark.com.*

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