

SURVIVE THE

Party

BURNOUT

WRITTEN BY ALEXANDRIA GOUVEIA

Beat FATIGUE

More time partying and less time sleeping depletes the body of its essential nutrients making you lethargic and moody, which is why in the run up to the festive season you should start conditioning your body with vital and natural vitamins. Nutritionist Roohi Hamrani (www.fitnessandfood.ae) says: “Artificial boosts are never recommended and are often detrimental. Endless cups of coffee are not good either because they can cause the jitters, high blood pressure, insomnia and a host of other unpleasant ailments, especially for those particularly susceptible to the effects of caffeine.”

However, before you throw out your kettle she adds: “For those regularly consuming just two to three cups a day, it can actually have a positive lift with a host of protective benefits too. If coffee isn’t your thing, choose green tea for a pick-me-up – it has the added benefit of being packed with antioxidants.”

If you must take supplements, Roohi recommends CoQ10, a nutrient that occurs naturally in the body and plays a vital part in cellular energy production, combating fatigue in a safe way. Roohi insists that keeping hydrated is also important: “Dehydration and fatigue go hand-in-hand. Some studies suggest even mild dehydration can slow down the metabolism and sap energy. Drink plenty of water at regular intervals.”

Get WELL-HEELED

The festive season generally entails dancing the night away in toe-crippingly small shoes – as long as they look great, you can ignore the pain. However, osteopaths and chiropractors warn this ‘fashion over common sense’ attitude is actually damaging with cases of lower-back problems soaring. Dr James Boyle, chiropractor at the California Chiropractic & Sports Medicine Center, Dubai (www.cccsm-center.com), said: “Make it a daily habit when you get home in the evening to soak your feet in warm water and give them a massage to ease pressure. If you have a bunion, soak your feet in ice water for 10-minutes to ease the pain. Also try putting a golf or tennis ball under your instep and roll it back and forth for a few minutes – it’s good for releasing tension.”

If you insist on wearing heels then vary between the heights, leaving the skyscrapers for special events only. Also, opt for specialised cushioned insoles that help distribute weight evenly on the foot, reducing pressure on the nerves in the lower vertebrae. Dr Boyle says: “There are a variety of cushion pads, insoles and bunion protectors available in pharmacies – invest in a pair or two and protect your feet!”

Dodge FAMILY BATTLES

It’s imperative to keep a sense of humour during the festive period. Tempers are frayed and relationships tested during this tumultuous period when families

reunite, especially if you have in-laws. The best thing to do in this situation is smile and be content in the knowledge that it’ll all be over soon. If you really can’t contain your contempt, then call a friend and have a good old moan – anything to avoid a fight. Carole Spiers, stress management expert and author of *Show Stress Who’s Boss!* says: “Emotions are high on the surface during festive periods. We end up spending time with people whom we might not normally see and so this is a time for keeping your cool. Not everyone does what we would like them to do and so the festive period is a time to stand back and not get too emotional over small things. It’s amazing how many things get out of hand so easily.”

Pre-tox NOT DETOX

Come January, everyone will be detoxing, however, the key to surviving the party season is actually pre-toxing – avoiding the hangover altogether. Roohi says: “The pre-tox is preparing your body, and possibly your mind, to handle the excesses of the season. It would be better to maintain a particularly regular and healthy approach to food, exercise and rest. Anything temporary such as a diet or detox will throw you off balance and may do more harm than good.”

“In anticipation of the immunity-suppressing effects of late nights and over indulgence, make sure you drink two to three litres of water a day, eat low-Glycemic carbs, quality proteins and good fats at regular intervals and never miss breakfast. Exercise 30 minutes a day, or at least putting in an hour at the gym three times per week. This makes your body better at handling the stresses of the season”.

Avoid THE FESTIVE DIVA

Surviving the festive period is an endurance test, with mounting tensions causing your inner diva to rear its ugly head. However, temper tantrums, huge demands – particularly when it comes to unrealistic present requests and catty behaviour – only lead to embarrassment in the new year, when everything simmers and all that is left is memories of your crude attitude. So, when you feel you’ve reached boiling point, take a step back and breathe, count to 10 and don’t snap. And if someone else is being the diva don’t tell them to calm down, this only antagonises the situation. Carole advises: “Take a step back and accept people for who they are. It doesn’t mean that you may like how they are behaving but do your best not to respond to them in an overly emotional way.” ▶

“NOT EVERYONE DOES WHAT WE WOULD LIKE THEM TO DO AND SO THE FESTIVE PERIOD IS A TIME TO STAND BACK AND NOT GET TOO EMOTIONAL OVER SMALL THINGS. IT’S AMAZING HOW MANY THINGS GET OUT OF HAND SO EASILY.”

IMAGES TRUNK



Maintain ZEN AND HEALTH

The festive period should be fun, not an endurance test. Yet, unfortunately, the season often induces stress and anxiety, testing our immune system and leaving us more susceptible to illnesses. "It's all about planning ahead, especially the shopping and cooking," says Carole. "The holiday period can be a time of creativity when you're not rushing around from place to place and meeting to meeting. It's only at times of quiet that your brain has a chance to be creative, so go for that long walk but take a thought with you of something that you really want to do."

Roohi also insists that maintaining a healthy lifestyle will help you keep your cool. "There are a host of nutrient-rich foods that can help restore a physical and mental balance," she says. "Blueberries in particular are high in antioxidants and vitamin C – both proven to play a vital role in relieving stress. Oranges and other vitamin C rich foods such as kiwis also have a similar effect. Celery is a great source of calcium and magnesium, which have a calming effect on the central nervous system. While almonds are packed with vitamin B2, vitamin E, magnesium, and zinc – involved in the production of serotonin, which helps regulate mood and relieve stress. There's also a good reason why children are given a warm glass of milk before going to bed – containing calming vitamins B2 and B12, milk also contains antioxidants that help destroy free radicals associated with stress."

Maintain THE MORNING-AFTER REGRETS

Work parties are extremely risky especially when, after a few too many, people start declaring their love for a colleague or spilling too much about their personal life, which often leads to horribly awkward situations when you return to work. "This is always a tricky one," says Carole. "It is important to remember that an office party is still part of the office. It may be held outside of the office premises but your behaviour will be remembered long after the celebrations have taken place. My advice is to always be professional and not to go beyond this line. People don't want to end up with bad reputations just because of one office party! Be very clear with your body language as well as verbal and non-verbal signals. Don't start something you don't want to finish and end up where you don't want to be!" If you do accidentally slip up, keep quiet when back in the office. If someone brings up the incident, laugh it off and move on – quickly.

Don't let BUSY NIGHTS AFFECT YOUR PERFORMANCE

Excessive working hours, endless partying and sleep deprivation all contribute to a less than fruitful performance at work. Striking a balance is imperative in order to maintain your motivation and concentration.

"Tryptophan is a building block of protein that the brain uses to build the sleep-inducing substances serotonin and melatonin," says Roohi. "It can be found in low-Glycemic carbohydrates such as cottage cheese, milk, soy milk, tofu, soybean, nuts, seafood, meats, poultry, wholegrains, beans, rice, hummus, lentils, hazelnuts, peanuts, eggs, sesame seeds and sunflower seeds. For a fulfilling sleeping session also take an adaptogen such as goji berries, ginseng or holy basil. Adaptogens are able to modulate the body's response to stress,

boosting energy levels, and increasing endurance."

If attending evening events steer clear of the alcohol, however if temptation gets the best of you drink beetroot juice the next day. "Alcohol, and its impurities, takes its toll on the liver, which is tasked with detoxifying the body," she continues. "Beetroot contains the compounds betaine and methionine that support liver detoxification. Start slow, with a small quantity of beet juice to ensure that the detox occurs at a gradual pace. Too fast and you you'll feel bad." Also a protein-rich breakfast such as eggs and a strong coffee will help as will L-glutamine, an amino acid powder that can be added to water and help detoxify the body.

Don't put YOUR CHRISTMAS ON THE PLASTIC

The pressure to buy presents, and good presents at that, is tremendous during this period, however, don't let it put you in the red, which will further induce stress. You have to be realistic, work out how much you can afford then calculate your budget accordingly – if it's less than you hoped then you'll just have to be more original with your purchases. If you must put gifts on the plastic, ensure you opt for a pre-paid card or a debit card that allows over-drafts at a low interest rate.

Streamline purchases by knowing exactly what you're buying. Last-minute sprees lead to frivolous buys and excessive bills. "Organise what it is that you want to buy and ask people for their present lists," advises Carole. "It's so much easier than just walking off not knowing what to buy. Also consider shopping online where you can get some amazing bargains, and avoid queues!"

Get INTO THAT LBD BY NYE

Moderation is the key to sustaining your weight during December. Roohi explains there's still hope that you

can squeeze into your New Year's Eve show-stopping dress: "Losing weight is simple – you need to burn more calories than you eat. A deficit of 500 calories per day and an increase in physical activity can see a drop of 1-2lbs in one week.

"More weight may come off if you limit salt and starchy carbs that cause fluid retention. It's important you do not cut calories below 1,200 per day – it actually becomes counterproductive because you lose fat and muscle, thus slowing your metabolism. For relatively quick weight loss eat mainly fruits, vegetables, egg whites, soy products, skinless poultry breasts, fish, non-fat dairy foods and lean meat. Getting enough protein this way and distributing it through the day will minimise muscle loss and maximise fat loss. Don't be tempted to skip meals – eating regularly will prevent binges!"

However, for rapid results your diet needs to be accompanied by exercise. Dylan Eiffe, general manager of Core Direction Dubai (coredirection.com), recommends a three-week plan that will get you in shape: "Train hard, aiming for quality, not quantity. My magic number is 4.5 hours per week of good quality training – mix of weights and cardio. An example weekly routine would be two Body Pump classes plus two Body Attack, Spin or Body Combat classes, plus 30-60 minutes cardio (eg a 20-30 minute jog before a Pump class)." ■

“THE HOLIDAY PERIOD CAN BE A TIME OF CREATIVITY WHEN YOU’RE NOT RUSHING AROUND FROM PLACE TO PLACE AND MEETING TO MEETING. IT’S ONLY AT TIMES OF QUIET THAT YOUR BRAIN HAS A CHANCE TO BE CREATIVE, SO GO FOR THAT LONG WALK BUT TAKE A THOUGHT WITH YOU OF SOMETHING THAT YOU REALLY WANT TO DO”