The holidays can be a tough time if you're trying to stick to a plan and lose weight. Here are some helpful tips to get you through the season without putting on extra pounds.

1. **Don't starve yourself.** Don't try to save up on calories by skipping meals as this can lead to overeating. Instead, try eating small, healthy meals or snacks throughout the day. Fill up on foods rich in fiber and protein to help you feel full. Some good choices include vegetables, whole grains, legumes (peas and beans) and dairy products (plain Greek yogurt).

2. **Keep active.** Be sure to get regular physical activity during the holiday season. Head to the gym, go for a jog, do a workout video at home, or take a walk with your family and friends after sharing a meal. All of these activities can help burn extra calories.

3. **Choose healthy appetizers.** Eat small portions of protein-based foods like nuts, shrimp and cheese. If you're bringing food to the party, bring something healthy so that you have options. Some ideas include a veggie platter with dip, a fruit salad, or hummus and whole wheat crackers. It's also a good idea to move away from the food table so that you are not tempted to keep snacking. Instead, start a conversation with friends or family in another area where food is not easily accessible.

4. **Balance your plate.** Be mindful of your portions and make sure that your dinner plate is balanced. First, fill half of your plate with non-starchy vegetables like a mixed green salad or steamed vegetables. A quarter of your plate should have lean protein like turkey or ham (size of palm) and the other quarter of your plate with starches and grains such as mashed potatoes, corn or stuffing (size of fist). Choose a small plate so you can better control your portions and not be tempted to overfill your plate.

5. **Slow down.** It takes about 20 minutes for your stomach to feel full so make sure to eat slowly and savor each bite. To slow yourself down you can cut your food into small pieces, put your fork down between bites, chew your food well, and drink water during your meal. Hungry for seconds? Give yourself at least ten minutes to determine whether you continue to be hungry before you fill up your plate again. If you do, choose vegetables and lean protein first. Both fiber and protein will help fill you up.

6. **Rethink your drink.** Save calories by drinking sparkling water or non calorie drinks. Avoid regular soda and juice because they can contain added sugars. Keep your alcohol to a minimum. This means up to one drink a day for women and two for men. Choose wine, light beer or hard alcohol mixed with soda water to cut back on calories.

7. **Enjoy a sweet ending.** Have your cake and eat it too! Just be mindful of the portion size. Choose a small piece or share with a family member or a friend. Fresh fruit is another good option.

8. **Did you overeat?** Don't panic! One day of indulging is not going to derail all of your hard work up to this point. Get back on track the next day by making healthy choices and staying active. When it comes to weight loss, consistency is key so keep up with your good habits and don't get discouraged!