

It could take 12 hours of walking to burn off your Christmas dinner

December 21 2021, by Amanda Daley



Christmas is a time when many people put on a few extra pounds. Credit: sutulastock/ Shutterstock

Overeating at Christmas time is almost like a tradition. Many of us look forward to piling our plates full of festive foods, snacking on chocolate

throughout the holidays or sipping on festive drinks. Even if you were trying to eat healthier, indulgent foods are often displayed more prominently in supermarkets and shops during the holidays, making it difficult to pass up on our favorite foods and drinks.

The [British Dietetic Association](#) estimates that on Christmas day alone people might consume around 6,000 calories—with Christmas dinner responsible for most of these. But spending time with friends, work Christmas parties and New Year's celebrations might all see us overeat in the days and even weeks before and after Christmas. It's no wonder the average adult gains [around 0.5–1kg](#) over the Christmas holidays.

While that might not sound like a lot, the [weight](#) we gain during the festive season [isn't always lost](#) in the new year. This excess weight gain over the years could see some people become overweight or obese, which may increase their [risk of many conditions](#), including cancer, diabetes, hypertension or stroke.

But [research shows](#) that giving people information about how many minutes of walking (or running) it will take to burn off the calories from foods or drinks can help people eat less and avoid [gaining weight at Christmas](#). So, how much walking do you need to do in order to burn off Christmas dinner?

Food	Calories	Minutes of walking
PRE-DINNER NIBBLES		
Handful of crisps & six olives	175	35
Two glasses of prosecco/beer	230	46
STARTER		
Bowl of soup with croutons	145	29
MAIN COURSE		
Two slices of turkey/small portion of nut roast	200	40
Three pigs in blankets	160	32
Mashed potatoes & three roast potatoes	335	67
Gravy & cranberry sauce	185	37
Stuffing	120	24
One Yorkshire pudding	150	30
Vegetables	90	18
DESSERT		
Christmas pudding/yule log	610	122
Custard/cream/ice cream	120	24
Cheese & biscuits	450	90
Four after dinner chocolates	200	40
DRINKS		
Two glasses of wine/beer	230	46
Post dinner port/brandy	75	15
COSTS OF CHRISTMAS DINNER	3,475 cals	695 minutes walking

Burning off Christmas dinner. Credit: Amanda Daley, Author provided

For an adult weighing 84kg it will take about 12 hours of steady paced walking (around four miles an hour) to burn off the calories of an average Christmas dinner. This is the equivalent of walking approximately 50 miles. Or, if you prefer, you could jog for about five to six hours.

Of course, the [number of calories](#) in your dinner will also depend on what foods you eat, how you prepare them and whether you go back for seconds. For example, if you cut out the pre-dinner nibbles and appetizers, and only have a yule log for dessert alongside two glasses of wine, your Christmas dinner may only come in around 2,080 calories. For someone weighing 84kg, this would only take around six and a half hours of walking to burn off.

The amount of physical activity you'll need to do to burn off your [dinner](#) will also depend on [many factors](#) such as age, gender and weight.

Holiday weight gain does not have to be inevitable—and walking is a great activity you can do by yourself or with others. While walking for 12 hours straight isn't something anyone wants to do during the holidays, there are many easy ways you can sneak more physical activity in during the holidays each day. For example, try walking to the shops instead of using your car if you can, or take a cycle around your neighborhood with your children to look at the Christmas lights.

Of course, it's hard not to indulge over Christmas since it only comes

around once a year. Some other easy ways to eat fewer calories during the holidays include snacking wisely, and being cautious with your portions. If you find that you have gained weight after Christmas don't be disheartened and try to focus on reducing the treats, and setting yourself a goal to get your weight back on track as soon as you can in the new year.

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