

The Free Fitness Tips Newsletter – December 2008

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Hello everyone. Welcome to the last **Free Fitness Tips Newsletter** of 2008. I hope you had a Merry Christmas and are looking forward to celebrating the New Year tonight. This month I've been getting in the Christmas spirit by posting a number of festive articles to the [Free Fitness Tips Blog](#). Hopefully these will help you keep your fitness levels up during the holiday period. So without further ado let's get on with this month's newsletter:

- [Featured Article!](#)
- [Free Fitness Tips Blog Updates!](#)
- [Final Words!](#)

1) Featured Article

This month I've been working extra hard to get the [Free Fitness Tips Blog](#) ready for the festive period. As a result I've got even more articles than usual to choose this month's featured entry from. However, as regular blog visitors will probably have guessed I have decided to go with...

6 Foods to Boost your Immune System this Christmas



In one of my recent articles I discussed how Christmas unfortunately brings with it an increased chance of getting the common cold or the flu. Since there are so many different types of cold and flu virus the body can never be completely immune to them. However, by making sure your immune system is working at full strength you can ensure that your body is in the best position possible to fight the common cold or the flu if you contract them. That's why today I will be sharing with you six foods that can keep your immune system strong over Christmas.

1) ORANGES:- Oranges seem to be a lot more abundant over Christmas with the main reason being that people use them to make their own Christingles. Luckily, they are also a rich source of [vitamin C](#). As I discussed in a [recent post](#), whilst vitamin C does not have a significant impact on your ability to prevent colds it can help boost your immune system by promoting the production of white blood cells that fight infection.

Oranges are small, easy to carry and can be pretty much eaten at any time making them a perfect immune system boosting snack. Try snacking on them at work or grabbing one instead of a mince pie next time the Christmas treats come out.

2) NUTS:- Nuts are another food that seem to get associated with Christmas. Yesterday I walked through the supermarket and saw a packet of fruit and nuts rebranded as 'Christmas' fruit and nuts (I wonder how long it took them to come up with that :-)). However, the marketing guys may have it right in terms of your immune system. Nuts are rich in [vitamin B6](#), [vitamin B9](#), [vitamin E](#) and selenium. Research suggests that both vitamin B6 and B9 support a healthy immune system. Vitamin E and selenium work together to enhance the production of immune system B-cells that produce antibodies to destroy bacteria and also act as antioxidants that protect the immune system's cells from oxidative damage.

Nuts are also very portable and make the perfect snack to keep at your work desk. If you find them too dry or bland then you could even pick up a 'Christmas' fruit and nut mix to give you some variety. Not only are they a festive snack but they are much better for your immune system than the sweets and chocolates that will undoubtedly be offered around.

3) TURKEY:- Turkey is probably the most festive food you can find. Unless you are vegetarian, it is highly likely that you will eat some turkey during the holiday period. Luckily, it is quite a healthy choice and it is good for your immune system too. It is rich in [vitamin B1](#), B6 and zinc. As discussed above the [B vitamins](#) have been linked with enhancing the immune system whilst zinc helps the body produce infection fighting white blood cells.

Unlike the other foods discussed in this article you are not going to have to go out of your way to get some turkey this Christmas. It's more than likely that turkey will be part of your Christmas meal and the leftovers can then be used to make some [wholemeal sandwiches](#) that you can bring to work. Alternatively, you can use the leftovers to cook up another meal such as a curry, casserole or stew.

4) MUSHROOMS:- Mushrooms are not very festive at all. However, they are good for your immune system (and in my opinion very tasty too) so you should try to incorporate them into your Christmas meals. Mushrooms are rich in a number of B-vitamins, vitamin C and zinc all of which can help boost your immune system (as I discussed above). Research also suggests that mushrooms activate the T cells of the immune system which help the body defend itself from viruses and infection.

Mushrooms are available in all supermarkets and most small grocery stores. They are amazingly versatile and can be eaten with most foods. I use them in curries, fajitas, pasta bakes, salads, omelettes and much more. Since it's Christmas you should have lots of turkey left over so why not make a turkey casserole, stew or curry and throw in lots of mushrooms. Not only will it add a new level of texture and taste to the meal but it will also keep your immune system in top shape.

5) GREEN TEA:- Green tea isn't the most popular drink around Christmas with hot chocolate and coffee being most people's first choice. However, of the hot drinks available it is one of the best for your immune system. Research suggests that green tea can enhance the disease fighting capacity of the immune system's T cells.

Green tea is relatively easy to source and available from most supermarkets. Whilst the taste may take some getting used to it can be drunk at any time during the day. All you need is access to some hot water. You don't have to replace all your hot drinks with green tea but if you normally have six cups of coffee and tea per day, why not try replacing three of them with green tea? That way you will still be able to have your normal hot drinks whilst also boosting your immune system.

6) YOGURT:- Yogurt has gained a lot of publicity recently with a lot of companies now selling it as a 'natural immune system booster' in small bottles. Although it's not a very festive food, research suggests that these companies are right. A lot of the cells that power the immune system are found in the gut and yoghurt contains pro-biotics which help keep the gut healthy. A healthy gut therefore supports a healthy immune system.

Yogurt is available in most supermarkets and small grocery stores. Plus, you do not need to go for the bottled 'natural immune system boosters'. A pot of natural or live yoghurt can do just as much for your immune system and costs a lot less. Whilst I find natural yoghurt quite plain on its own, if you eat it with fruit such as blueberries or pineapple it becomes a really tasty meal. I have natural yogurt and fruit for breakfast most mornings so why not try having yogurt first thing in the morning or even have it as a dessert option on Christmas day. It's still

very tasty and will do much more for your immune system than the mince pies and cakes.

I hope this article has helped you understand how you can keep your immune system strong this Christmas. Whilst some (or even most of these foods) would not be your first festive food choice they will do wonders for your immune system. Try incorporating them into your diet using some of the suggestions I have suggested and hopefully you can avoid any colds and flu this Christmas.

2) Free Fitness Tips Blog Updates

As I mentioned since it's Christmas this has been the key topic for December. However, since this is a fitness blog I wanted these articles to have a healthy focus. You can check out all this month's healthy Christmas articles below:

- [*The Common Cold & The Flu Explained - December 2nd 2008*](#)
- [*Can Vitamin C Help You Avoid the Christmas Colds? - December 4th 2008*](#)
- [*6 Foods to Boost your Immune System this Christmas - December 7th 2008*](#)
- [*Don't let SAD Ruin your Christmas - December 8th 2008*](#)
- [*4 Foods that could Improve your Mood this Christmas - December 11th 2008*](#)
- [*The Importance of Getting Enough Sleep this Christmas - December 14th 2008*](#)
- [*6 Christmas Exercise Ideas - December 16th 2008*](#)
- [*5 Outdoor Exercises you can do this Christmas - December 18th 2008*](#)
- [*4 Top Tips for Improving your Mood this Christmas - December 20th 2008*](#)
- [*The Importance of getting enough Vitamin D this Christmas - December 22nd 2008*](#)
- [*8 Ways to Lighten your Christmas Dinner - December 24th 2008*](#)
- [*5 Healthy Winter Breakfast Ideas - December 27th 2008*](#)
- [*Replace Christmas Candy with Dried Fruit and Nuts - December 29th 2008*](#)

3) Final Words

December's been an incredibly busy month for me. I've tried to get a new festive article posted to this blog every couple of days plus I've been extremely busy at work. Thankfully the time off over the Christmas period has allowed me to have a little rest. Hopefully these festive fitness articles have helped you stay relatively healthy during the testing times (in fitness terms) that are the Christmas holidays.

It is almost impossible to stick to your usual diet and keep up a consistent exercise routine during this busy period but every little helps. Even if you only do a small amount of exercise and eat a couple of pieces of fruit per day it is much better than completely letting yourself go. Most of these articles contain practical tips to help you get some healthy foods into your diet and do some exercise in the cold and wet conditions. I strongly advise you to have a read (if you have not done so already) and use the information to work on your Christmas fitness.

Next month it will be business as usual at [Free Fitness Tips](#). I have so many ideas floating around in my head for what to write about and I'm really not sure where to start. However, you will know what I decided on in the next couple of days.

That's it for another month. Thanks for reading. All I've got to say is I hope you have a Happy New Year tonight. Try not to party too hard but if you do don't dwell on it. Just make sure you get back on with your healthy eating and fitness training early in January 2009.

Until next time,

Tom Parker (Owner and Creator of Free Fitness Tips)

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