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# 4 tips for cops to get healthy habits back on track

## Don't let one slip up derail you

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By Joe LeFevre, PoliceOne Contributor

I had a bad weekend recently. Actually, it was a fun weekend. However, health-wise it was a crash and burn. When Monday came, I did not say "forget it" and ignore the healthy routine I had built up. I slid right back into the gym, along with sensible eating.

During the holiday season, Super Bowl weekend or any other time of celebration, the temptation to indulge is overwhelming. From family events to work-sponsored social functions, opportunities to overeat and skip workouts occur all the time. The food is always abundant, the desserts are impossible to pass up and alcohol is often present.

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Recently for me, it was a busy Saturday that ended with a trip to the botanical gardens holiday light show. Heading home



You might stumble. Please don't use that as an excuse to give up.

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healthy lifestyle are occurring, regaining a routine becomes a struggle. Here are four tips to keep on track if you do get a little derailed.

### 1. RELAX

late, we decided to get burgers from a fast food drive up window. Then on Sunday, after taking down the Christmas tree and decorations, we decided to order a pizza. And, I might even have enjoyed a few beverages with the neighbor during a football game.

Unfortunately, some would find a derailment like this an excuse to quit all of their healthy habits. With various gatherings and events going on throughout the year, the common refrain can be the hope to get back on track after the weekend, vacation or whatever excuse you may have.

Why wait to get back on track? Why feel like a little cheat is a total derailment?

A fitness guru at a conference once said, "If you accidentally put a hole in the wall trying to hang a picture, do you burn down your house and wait through months of rebuilding to fix the problem? No, you put a new hook up and hang that photo, so it covers the hole. Chances are you will forget the hole and no one else will ever know it is there."

But quitting is an attitude some take when it comes to good eating and exercise habits. Once the routine is broken the feeling is it can't be fixed. Then, when it becomes weeks or months later and efforts (or thoughts) about trying to get back to a

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My coach always preaches the 80/20 rule. If you are following a healthy lifestyle 80 percent of the time you can make up for the 20 percent of time you don't. The overall lifestyle of eating right and working out are more important than any one event. He does caution that a person should aim for healthy lifestyle choices closer to 95 percent of the time versus 80 percent.

Think about it in a reverse context. If you have an amazingly intense workout then eat a perfectly balanced meal, the next day you don't wake up with diamond cut six-pack abs. Changes to the body take time to happen. Whatever you did today is not going to destroy the last few months of work.

## 2. DON'T PUNISH YOURSELF

I hear people around me talk about skipping lunch because of an eating decision they made when off work. Skipping a meal will make you hungry. When you get hungry, the cravings come. Once the cravings hit, bad decisions get made. Now you have been off plan for two days, and it can grow worse from there.

Keep in mind that it takes 3,500 calories to equal a pound of body fat. For an average person, on a simple three meals a day eating plan, a meal is assumed to be between 600-800 calories. If you overindulge, think about these numbers. To what extent has your little cheat actually done damage?

## 3. FOCUS

Football coach Lou Holtz asked his players, "What's important now?" Author Brian Willis writes and talks about this question as the acronym "W.I.N." for police officers. After a massive cheat, refocus on that question.

The holidays, family celebrations, social events and vacations are a time for fun. It's a time to enjoy the company of others. It might be the only time per year you get to see certain family or friends.

When I talk to people about healthy lifestyle decisions, most are motivated by quality of life factors (followed quickly by physical appearance reasons). People want to feel good, have the energy to play when off duty and live long enough to spend more time with loved ones.

What's important now? Yesterday, you spent time with people you care about and in doing so skipped the gym and ate too much. Today, focus on why you have your healthy habits, not on an event taking you off track.

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## 4. PLAN

You know what gatherings you have on your calendar. Before the next one takes place, take some time to think about what you will do. Then take steps to mitigate the damage beforehand.

Can you be more strict on eating habits in the days before an event? How about getting an extra workout in during the week before a massive meal? Go into an overindulgence with the feeling you will not need a rebound after it.

If you are traveling, and possibly missing an opportunity to use the gym, figure out a way to still get in a workout. I often take a jump rope and a kettlebell with me on road trips. You don't need a ton of machines to have a solid workout.

If this is the year for you to get back in shape, or kick some bad habit, remember the above four tips. Habits don't happen overnight. You might stumble. Please don't use that as an excuse to give up.

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