

How to stay focussed during the festive season



Early December usually marks the big '20 weeks to go' until your Spring marathon. That means it's time to start the focus, get a plan written and challenge yourself and your commitment during what is essentially the busiest most fun month of the year for many.

If you can stay focussed during December, the rest of your training will be a sinch! That's easier said than done though, right? Here's how to stay engaged during the festive period...

Set realistic goals

When people start training, they often overstretch themselves, or convince themselves they can do more than is realistic. Get your work and social diaries together and cross off the days you definitely **cannot** run.

Don't be too specific with your goals

Before getting into the speed sessions, the intervals, the Fartleks, the hills and any other sessions you might do as part of your training, just get into a routine.

Spend December 'just running'. Tell yourself to go out for x amount of time and just plod. You can structure things more rigidly in the new year.

Set some 'no going out' days

Be strict with yourself and lay aside some days with 'must runs'. December is about setting the standard for yourself and getting into a running routine.

Tell yourself (and your family) that there are some days when you **must** run. Why not make them morning runs? You can be smug for the rest of the day and relax later!

Let the world know you're training

There's nothing like a bit of responsibility to make sure you don't fall at the first hurdle. Tell your friends and family you're starting your training and tell them to ask you for updates. That way, you know there's nowhere to hide. Why not rope them into getting out on a few runs with you, too?

Don't beat yourself up

The festive period is about enjoyment. Don't martyr yourself and make yourself feel terrible because you've had a couple of drinks or an extra portion of trifle. Enjoy December and know that so long as you hit a routine, you can really go for it come the new year.

