EATING WELL ON HOLIDAY

A flexible, practical system for enjoying your holiday while still supporting your health, fitness and confidence.

NO TRACKING. NO GUILT. NO "STARTING AGAIN".

START HERE

A good holiday is not a failed routine

You do not need to choose between enjoying your holiday and caring about your goals. A holiday is a small part of the year. Your job is not to eat perfectly; it is to make enough helpful decisions that you return feeling good, without turning every meal into a negotiation.

THE HOLIDAY TARGET	Maintain a few anchors, enjoy the foods that matter to you, and return to your normal routine at the next ordinary opportunity.

Choose your level

LEVEL 1 - SWITCH OFF	You need a complete break. Eat intuitively, enjoy the trip and restart your normal routine when you return.
LEVEL 2 - KEEP ANCHORS	Use the Neon system in this guide. This is the best fit for most members.
LEVEL 3 - STAY STRUCTURED	You have a near-term performance or physique goal. Keep meals closer to normal and plan indulgences deliberately.

None of these levels makes you more disciplined or more successful. Pick the one that matches the holiday you are actually taking.

YOUR DAILY SYSTEM

The Neon 3-anchor system

Aim to complete these three anchors on most holiday days. If one meal is less balanced, the day is not ruined - simply return to the next anchor.

1. PROTEIN 3 TIMES	Include a clear protein source at breakfast, lunch and dinner. A practical serving is roughly one to two palms, or about 20-40 g where labels are available.[1]
2. PRODUCE TWICE	Include fruit or vegetables in at least two meals. Across the whole day or week, work towards a varied pattern rather than forcing balance into every plate.[2]
3. HYDRATE EARLY	Drink water after waking and with your first meal. Continue regularly, especially in hot weather or when active. Pale-yellow urine is a useful guide.[3]

THE FLEXIBLE EXTRA

Choose one thing each day that you genuinely want - dessert, cocktails, a local speciality or a larger meal. Enjoy it deliberately instead of grazing on everything because it is available.

The easiest day shape

- Breakfast: protein + fruit + a carbohydrate if you are active.
- Lunch: protein-led plate with vegetables or fruit.
- Dinner: build a balanced plate, then choose the holiday extra you value most.
- Snacks: eat them because you are hungry, not simply because food is nearby.

BREAKFAST

Build a breakfast that keeps options open

Breakfast does not need to be tiny. It needs to give you a useful start without accidentally becoming three meals at once.

Use the 1 + 1 + optional 1 rule

1 PROTEIN	Eggs, egg whites, Greek yoghurt, skyr, cottage cheese, lean ham, smoked salmon, beans or a protein shake.
1 FRUIT	Fresh fruit, berries, melon, banana, apple or an unsweetened fruit portion.
OPTIONAL CARB	Toast, oats, cereal, potatoes or a pastry. Add this when hungry, active or training; choose the one you actually want.

Buffet examples

- Option A: eggs, lean breakfast meat, grilled tomatoes, fruit and toast.
- Option B: Greek yoghurt, fruit, a small handful of granola and eggs on the side.
- Option C: omelette with vegetables, fruit and a pastry you genuinely enjoy.
- Option D: beans on toast with eggs and fruit.

PAUSE BEFORE ROUND TWO

Finish your first plate, have a drink and wait 10 minutes. If you are still hungry, go back. This separates appetite from buffet momentum.

LUNCH AND DINNER

The holiday plate builder

Use your hand to make decisions when menus and portions are unfamiliar. This is a guide, not a rulebook.

PROTEIN	1-2 palms: chicken, fish, lean meat, eggs, tofu, tempeh, beans, lentils, yoghurt or cheese.
VEGETABLES	1-2 fists when practical: salad, grilled vegetables, soup, vegetable sides or fruit.
CARBOHYDRATE	1 cupped hand, or 2 when training/very active: rice, pasta, potatoes, bread, wraps or grains.
FATS / SAUCES	1 thumb, then adjust for richer meals: oils, butter, cheese, nuts, creamy sauces or dressings.

Order in this sequence

- 1. Pick the protein you want.
- 2. Add a vegetable or fruit source.
- 3. Add enough carbohydrate for your appetite and activity.
- 4. Decide whether the meal itself is the treat, or whether you would rather save room for dessert or drinks.

RESTAURANT REALITY	A creamy pasta, pizza or burger can still fit. Do not try to "cancel it out". Make the meal your flexible choice, eat until comfortably satisfied and return to your anchors next time.

WHEN FOOD IS EVERYWHERE

Buffets and all-inclusive holidays

The challenge is rarely one big meal. It is the repeated picking, tasting and drinking that can continue from morning to night. Give the day a shape.

The one-look method

- Look first. Walk the buffet before taking a plate.
- Choose favourites. Pick foods you would be disappointed to miss.
- Build one main plate. Start with protein and produce, then add the foods you selected.
- Sit down to eat. Avoid eating while walking around or standing at the buffet.
- Return only with a reason. Go back because you are hungry or want one specific item - not to fill space.

Use a two-out-of-three decision

At a richer meal, choose the two you care about most: starter, alcohol, dessert. You can have all three sometimes, but making a conscious choice stops every dinner automatically becoming all three.

ALL-INCLUSIVE DOES NOT MEAN ALL-DAY	Create normal eating windows: breakfast, lunch, dinner and an optional snack. Free availability is not a requirement to keep eating.

DRINKS

Alcohol without losing the whole next day

If you drink alcohol, the most useful strategy is deciding before the first drink. UK guidance says that, to keep health risks low, adults should not regularly drink more than 14 units per week, spread across three or more days.[4] There is no pressure to drink.

Pick your boundary

NUMBER	Choose a rough maximum before you start, then stop or switch to alcohol-free drinks.
TIME	Choose a finishing time so drinking does not continue simply because the venue is open.
PACE	Alternate alcoholic drinks with water or sugar-free soft drinks.
FREQUENCY	Choose drinking nights rather than drinking automatically every night of the holiday.

- Eat a proper meal before or while drinking. Do not save all your food for alcohol.
- Start the evening hydrated and keep water beside the bed.
- The next morning, resume breakfast and hydration. Do not punish yourself with starvation or excessive exercise.

SAFETY FIRST

Do not drink before driving, swimming, water sports or activities where judgement matters. Medication, pregnancy and health conditions can change what is safe - seek individual medical advice.

AIRPORTS, CARS AND LONG JOURNEYS

Travel days: control what you can

Travel days become chaotic when you wait until you are starving and then choose from whatever is nearest. Pack or buy one protein option, one fruit option and water early.

PROTEIN	Protein yoghurt, shake, cooked eggs, chicken sandwich, tuna pot, jerky, edamame or a protein bar.
FRUIT / FIBRE	Whole fruit, fruit pot, vegetable snack pack, oatcakes or a higher-fibre sandwich.
HYDRATION	Carry an empty bottle through airport security and fill it afterwards, or buy water before boarding.
COMFORT FOOD	Choose one travel treat if you want it. Eat it alongside the planned food, not instead of every meal.

A simple airport meal

Choose a sandwich, wrap, salad bowl or hot meal with a clear protein source. Add fruit or vegetables and water. If the portion is small, add yoghurt, milk or another protein side rather than buying several snack foods.

DELAYED?	Do not let a delay turn into endless grazing. Decide when your next meal will be, eat it seated, then close the eating window until hunger returns.

TRAINING AND MOVEMENT

Fuel activity - do not earn your food

Walking, swimming, hotel-gym sessions and runs can help you feel good, but they are not repayment for eating. Keep movement enjoyable and proportionate to the holiday.

If you train

- Have a carbohydrate source before longer or harder sessions if needed: toast, oats, cereal, rice, potatoes, fruit or a sports drink.
- Eat a protein-containing meal within a few hours afterwards. Active adults commonly benefit from roughly 1.4-2.0 g protein per kg body weight per day, with 20-40 g portions spread across the day.[1]
- Drink more than your usual baseline in hot weather and after sweating.[3]
- Reduce intensity when sleep, heat, travel or alcohol has affected recovery.

If you do not train

That is completely fine. Keep the three anchors, walk when it suits the trip and resume structured training when you return. A week away will not erase months of work.

MINIMUM USEFUL MOVEMENT	A relaxed walk after one meal, a swim, sightseeing on foot or 10 minutes of mobility all count. The best holiday movement is the one that adds to the experience.

EXAMPLE STRUCTURE

A seven-day holiday playbook

Use this as a decision guide, not a meal plan. Swap days around and adjust for your own appetite, medical needs and itinerary.

DAY 1 - TRAVEL	Pack a protein snack and fruit. Eat a normal meal on arrival. Hydrate before deciding on alcohol.
DAY 2 - EXPLORE	Balanced breakfast, local lunch, favourite dinner. Let the walking happen naturally.
DAY 3 - POOL	Protein breakfast, lighter lunch, planned drinks with dinner. Keep water visible all day.
DAY 4 - ACTIVE	Add carbohydrate at breakfast, complete the activity, then eat a protein-led lunch and relaxed dinner.
DAY 5 - FOOD DAY	Keep breakfast simple. Enjoy the market, tour or special restaurant without compensation.
DAY 6 - FLEX	Return to the three anchors. Pick one flexible extra rather than grazing from morning onward.
DAY 7 - HOME	Hydrate, eat regular meals and prepare one easy breakfast or lunch for your first day back.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE	You remember the meals because they were enjoyable - not because you spent the holiday calculating, compensating or feeling guilty.

RESET, DO NOT RESTART

If a day goes differently

A large meal, several drinks or an unplanned day does not need a correction phase. Some short-term scale change after travel can reflect more food in the digestive system, extra carbohydrate, salt and fluid - not only body fat.

Your next-day reset

1. HYDRATE	Drink water after waking and regularly through the day.
2. EAT BREAKFAST	Choose protein and fruit. Do not skip meals to compensate.
3. MOVE NORMALLY	Walk or train only if it feels appropriate, not as punishment.
4. RESUME ANCHORS	Return to protein, produce and hydration at the next meal.
5. DROP THE STORY	One day is information, not proof that you lack control.

When you get home

- Return to your usual meal pattern at the next meal.
- Shop for two easy protein sources, fruit, vegetables and familiar carbohydrates.
- Resume training progressively if travel disrupted sleep or recovery.
- If you weigh yourself, expect normal fluctuation. Judge the trend after several ordinary days, not the first morning home.

QUICK CHECKLIST

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Before the holiday

- Choose Level 1, 2 or 3.
- Pack a water bottle and one travel snack.
- Decide whether you will train, move casually or completely rest.
- Identify the meals or experiences you most want to enjoy.

Most days

- Protein at breakfast, lunch and dinner.
- Fruit or vegetables at least twice.
- Water early and regularly.
- One deliberate flexible extra.
- Eat seated and pause before seconds.

After an indulgent meal

- No guilt.
- No skipped meals.
- No punishment workout.
- Return to the next normal meal.

THE NEON RULE Never turn one enjoyable choice into a week of "I have blown it anyway". The next useful decision is always available.

EVIDENCE

References and important notes

[1] Jager R, et al. International Society of Sports Nutrition Position Stand: protein and exercise. Journal of the International Society of Sports Nutrition. 2017;14:20. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12970-017-0177-8

[2] NHS. The Eatwell Guide. https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/food-guidelines-and-food-labels/the-eatwell-guide/

[3] NHS. Water, drinks and hydration. https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/food-guidelines-and-food-labels/water-drinks-nutrition/

[4] Department of Health and Social Care. UK Chief Medical Officers low risk drinking guidelines. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/alcohol-consumption-advice-on-low-risk-drinking

Important

This guide provides general education for adult Neon Fitness members. It is not a personalised diet plan or medical advice. Needs vary with body size, activity, pregnancy, breastfeeding, medication, allergies, gastrointestinal conditions, diabetes, kidney disease and other health factors. If you have a medical condition, a history of disordered eating, or specific dietary requirements, ask an appropriately qualified healthcare professional or registered dietitian for individual guidance.

NEED SUPPORT? Message your Neon coach before you travel. We can help you choose a realistic level and the few habits that matter most for your goal.