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Christmas is a time for festive fitness

The Christmas break is just around the corner and while that provides an opportunity to catch up on all your favourite TV shows and see your family, it can also lead to deviated diets and abandoned fitness regimes.

South Western Sydney Local Health District's Health Promotion Service Director, Mandy Williams said people can have the best of both worlds by using the down time to catch up with friends and get a work out at the same time.

"With a little forward planning and a dash of self-discipline, it is easy to enjoy a festive Christmas and enter the New Year feeling fit and fresh," Ms Williams said.

Staying active during the holidays not only reduces your chances of gaining weight but can also help reduce stress and reenergise you.

"Exercise releases a happy chemical into your brain called dopamine and plays a crucial role giving us feelings of pleasure and happiness.

"Given that time is one of the biggest barriers to exercise, a break from the usual work routine can provide the ideal opportunity to begin or maintain physical activity," she said.

If an influx of relatives and visitors makes it difficult to do your usual workout, Ms Williams said you can try getting everyone involved in a game.

"Backyard cricket is an Australian favourite and all you really need to get a game going is a cricket bat, some balls and a nearby bin as stumps.

"Who doesn't like a game of Frisbee? All you need is a flying plastic disc, a pair of legs, your relatives, friends and a big backyard or local park to play in.

"Touch football is not only a crowd pleaser but also a massive calorie burner that develops your speed, agility and coordination," she said.

While it would be Grinch like to suggest that you forgo all the delicious treats that come with festive feasts, Ms Williams said you can be selective about what you eat.

"Try choosing healthier nibbles like wholegrain crackers with hummus, unsalted nuts, popcorn, strawberries, blueberries or sultanas instead of chips and chocolate," she said.