What's on your wish list this holiday season?

Have you made your list and checked it twice? Cal Poly students have, and from books and music to the latest technology, here's what ranks high on Cal Poly students' lists.

Christina Casci
MUSTANG DAILY

Microsoft's Xbox 360 or Playstation 3

These are both the hot new gaming systems out. With great graphics and multiple capabilities, they make current and prospective gamers very happy. The Xbox 360 will probably be easier to get this year because there is a little time between its release date and the holidays, but they will go fast anyway. Decide which to get depending on the person's preference. "Xbox 360 is a fusion of hardware, software and services. Without the software and services to power it, even the most powerful hardware becomes inconsequential," according to ign.com, a large internet gaming site run by Fox Interactive Media, Inc.

"Talladega Nights: The Ballad of Ricky Bobby"

Ah, Ricky Bobby. The movie everyone hyped-up. Described as "one of the funniest movies I have ever seen," by almost every person who saw it, Talladega Nights is worth watching. It is full of quotable lines that you will be repeating for an entire month after watching it. Anybody that saw it wants to own it so they can watch it over and over again.

"Beerfest"

The movie everyone wants because they heard it was hilarious. From the Broken Lizard crew, "Beerfest" is vulgar but automatically funny. Numerous Cal Poly students called it "so funny" and "fantastic." This is the perfect gift for a college student because it is just one of those movies that people have to laugh at out of the sheer ridiculousness. But you wouldn't expect much else from the people who made "Super Troopers," would you?

The Killers - "Sam's Town"

The new Killers album is incredibly popular and people all over campus are putting it on their wish lists. With two singles out so far, "Bones" and "When You Were Young," the album is sure to be a huge success. With many more mature songs than their last album, "Sam's Town" lives up to the acclaim it's getting. Anybody you get this for will love it.

Snow Patrol - "Eyes Open"

Though this may not be the newest thing on the list, it is the most popular. The album rocketed to the top of the charts after "Chasing Cars" was on the "Grey's Anatomy" Season 2 Finale. It is on the list of many Cal Poly students, as well as being on amazon.com's bestsellers list. This is a great album to listen to while doing homework or hanging out with people. It's very versatile and really fun to listen to.

see List, page 5

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Graduation from college is a major event. Graduation evaluations, countless meetings with advisors, checking, double-checking, triple-checking, even quadruple-checking, units taken, all for a piece of paper that says you did it! You jumped through all the hoops Cal Poly threw at you, and now you’re ready for a solid, 9-to-5 job.

I am graduating in five days. It’s kind of neat to know that I’m part of a relatively small group of students who will finish school midyear instead of in June. It’s almost like we’re a special secret society. When I’ve mentioned it to my classmates, their reactions have ranged from excited admiration to jealousy, and with the latter came a sudden desire to throw things at me — I’ll admit it, I didn’t expect that. And then comes the inevitable question: “what are you going to do after you graduate?” Thank goodness I have an answer — there’s nothing worse than not knowing what your future plans are when your future is a week away.

I applied to Cal Poly as a long shot, just to see if I could get in. Four and a half years later, I’m finishing my degree — with a French minor, no less — and I’m amazed to think that my life would have taken a completely different path had I not chosen to go to Cal Poly.

As high school juniors and seniors, we know that the decision to go to college is a major one, and some of us stress out over it, big-time, but I was relatively calm about my decision. I got into four out of the five colleges that I applied to, and after visiting Cal Poly, I was hooked. It just felt like my home away from home, more so than any other college I had visited so far. Four years later, I don’t regret my decision at all. I never did. That has to say something about the university.

As challenging as a Cal Poly education is, the students and environment make it feel like home — at least for me. My sister is considering applying, and I couldn’t be happier. I am careful to not force her into a decision, just as my parents were with me and are with her, but there is a little part of me that secretly hopes that she is able to enjoy her education here as much as I did mine.

During the quarter, I’ve been very tempted to walk around on campus with my head held high, but I’ve been humbled by the amount of work I’ve had to finish before I could. “You won’t have any reason to be proud if you don’t finish that article!” I would tell myself. Cal Poly really does put students through the wringer once they declare that they want to graduate. Now that I’m done with the work, I find myself feeling a little awkward, like there’s something else I should be doing. It’ll wear off. I’ve felt like this almost every night until at least midnight.

It’s hard for me to believe that I’m considered a competent, mature candidate for a full-time job now. Some would argue that real-world experience is more valuable than a college degree when applying for a job, but I feel like I needed the degree to give me a boost of self-confidence. I would have felt unworthy and unprepared for a job in my field of interest if I hadn’t gone to college.

So, now I go home to find a job. I like to think that I have an advantage in applying for a job in January as opposed to June, since many employers are hiring at the beginning of the year, but I’m also scared. Most people, in general, don’t look forward to living with their parents after graduation, and I am no exception. Thoughts like, “what if it takes me months to find a job?” and “what if I’m forced to take a job I hate somewhere else because I can’t stand living at home?” fly through my head almost daily. But, I have to at least try. You never know what can happen until you try.

Life is hard, but I’m also looking forward to making my own money. I have been very well taken care of throughout my college education — my parents have paid for everything. I don’t expect being on my own to be easy, but it’s also exciting to know that I will be completely self-sufficient, and I won’t have to make any calls home when I need more money.

I have always admired people who are well-adjusted and content with where they are at in life, no matter what comes their way. I aspire to be one of those people someday, and I consider graduation from college the first step in that direction. It’s the first accomplishment in my life that I’ve truly felt
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Graduation
continued from page 3

I’m proud of. Graduating from high school was fine — most people do that — but when I walk out of the Rec Center on Saturday, I will have something that many people don’t: a college degree.

I don’t mean to sound elitist. It’s just that I have accomplished something huge, and I should get recognition for it. Normally, I’m a very modest person, so it feels a little strange to be announcing it to everyone — honestly, I’m a little uncomfortable when I see people’s reactions to it. I’m not used to being the center of attention. But, it is big. I am my paternal grandparent’s first grandchild to graduate from college. That’s something to be proud of. And I intend to make my family even more proud when I find myself a great job and start making my own life. As the song says, “This could be the start of something... big!” This is definitely the start of something big, and I intend to enjoy it.

List
continued from page 2

“The CollegeHumor Guide to College: Selling Kidneys for Beer Money, Sleeping with Your Professors, Majoring in Communications, and Other Really Good Ideas from the writers of CollegeHumor.com”

This may not be the most well-known book right now, but it will get there. This is one of the funniest books a college student could read. Reviews on Amazon.com called it “laugh out loud hilarious,” and “a must read for anyone who is going to college, in college, or went to college.” The Web site CollegeHumor.com is full of videos, pictures and other random things.

Apple’s Video iPod

Though many people already have them, this is the season for all those without the increasingly popular iPod to get theirs. The 30GB iPod is big enough for your music and a couple videos. However, if you have an endless amount of music and don’t mind the extra $100, go for the 80GB one. The battery life lasts up to 14 hours on the 30GB and up to 20 hours on the 80GB option.

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Dear Santa,
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Love, Kristen Marschall

North Pole: Alaska town flooded with letters to Santa

Rachel D’Oro
ANCHORED PRESS

ANCHORAGE, Alaska — It’s a name that needs no address. Everyone knows Santa Claus lives at the North Pole.
So letters sent to the jolly-jolly icon always find their way to the small town of North Pole deep in Alaska’s interior, including those simply addressed to Santa. Last year 12,000 letters arrived from 26 countries, not counting the thousands with no return address. Those that do have return addresses usually get a reply and a North Pole postmark in a holiday effort that delighted children all over the world for more than five decades.

Letters trickle in year round at the community of 1,500, where light poles are curved and striped like candy canes and streets have names like Santa Claus Lane and Kris Kringle Drive. Then, around Thanksgiving, they start pouring in by the thousands each day as Christmas approaches. Even stamp-less letters get through, a rare exception for the U.S. Postal Service.

“This is special because it has Santa’s name on it,” said Debby, see Letters, page 7

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Letters continued from page 6

Cornelius, a supervisor at the main post office in the nearby city of Fairbanks. This is where the Santa letters are processed during the holiday rush.

"It's what makes Christmas magic for children," Cornelius said. "Why not make that available for them?"

Gabby Gaborik is among several dozen volunteers who believe in the Santa cause, opening crates full of letters, as many as 12,000 a day come crunch time. With 6,000 new arriving daily, volunteers are busy sending off preprinted replies to children who sent return addresses.

"We try to keep the big guy mystical, so we sign off as Santa's elves and helpers," Gaborik said. "Anyone can be an elf."

In his 10 years as an elf, Gaborik has seen every kind of request. There are the children who want the latest toys and gizmos they see on TV. There are the children who ask for miracles, orphans wanting their mother back for Christmas or a father back from Iraq, even though he died there. Many letter writers point out how good they've been. Some enclose a dollar bill to cover postage.

Gaborik still marvels at a missive that arrived three years with a Michigan postmark and no postage stamp. It was addressed to Santa Claus and had no return address either on the envelope or the letter. Inside was a thousand-dollar money order and an anonymous note that said: "If you are who you say you are, you'll put this to good use."

Volunteers bought postage stamps for the effort. "I believe Santa Claus has qualities that represent the good in everybody, and people reach out to that," Gaborik said. "Santa Claus represents their validation as a good person, when everything today is so quick, so hard, so bang, bang, bang."

He finished a random letter out of a pile. This one ran the gamut. The writer, Ashley, wants only one thing, an iPod Nano, but then asks, "What list am I on, the naughty or nice list? If I'm on the naughty, what could I do to get off (sic)?"

Then comes the hook: "And how many cookies do you think you can eat on Christmas night?"

Ah, but no matter how cookies in the lure, Santa and his helpers never make any promises in writing.

Ideally, parents and other adults write their own Santa replies, put them in a stamped, self-addressed envelope and tuck them into a larger envelope addressed to the Fairbanks post office.

The Daily Campus

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Letters

continued from page 7

Neither way, replies get a North Pole postal cancellation mark, complete with a half-moon drawing of Santa's face. The Fairbanks post office also stamps the postmark on thousands of Christmas cards and packages diverted through Alaska from outside the state each year. Postal officials recommend getting all items to them by Tuesday (Dec. 12).

Letters arriving by mid-December have a better chance of a reply before Christmas. Late letters, however, will still get a letter "signed by Santa," Goode said.

"It says something like 'Thanks for writing. Santa's been real busy, anything the kiddies might want to hear?,'" she said.

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HOLIDAY EDITION

Local law enforcement New Year's resolution: less DUIs

Fourteen law enforcement agencies from around the county will team up this holiday season in an effort to curb drunk driving.

Tyler Wise

MUSTANG DAILY

Law enforcement agencies all over San Luis Obispo County are teaming up to increase highway patrols and establish various sobriety checkpoints in a campaign to curb driving under the influence this holiday season.

In one of the state's most aggressive campaigns of the year, "Avoid the 14" symbolizes a joint effort of 14 county law enforcement agencies from Arroyo Grande to Paso Robles, to put a stop to drunk driving, according to a press release. The group will also include university police officers from both Quinta College and Cal Poly.

"Most of our activity will be limited near campus," said Cal Poly University Police Chief Bill Watton. "But we will be manning some of the various checkpoints throughout San Luis Obispo." At this time, the locations of the sobriety checkpoints have not been disclosed and will only be available 24 hours in advance before they are set in place, county representa-

tive Kimberly Mott said.

The campaign, which began on Nov. 24 and ends Jan. 2, also calls for public help in reporting drunk drivers, county representative Kimberly Mott said.

"Law enforcement can only do so much," said the California Office of Traffic Safety Director Christopher J. Murphy in a press release. "Knowing that other motorists are to going to report drunk drivers is a significant deterrent and all of our efforts are aimed at preventing a drunk driver from getting behind the wheel in the first place. One phone call can really save a life."

2005 marks the seventh consecutive year in which alcohol-related fatalities have increased in California, compared to a nationwide decrease of 0.2 percent between 2004 and 2005.

"Fatalities are clearly on the rise in California, and compared to other counties, there is a significantly larger percent of alcohol-related fatalities in San Luis Obispo County," Mott said. In 2005, San Luis Obispo reported 528 alcohol-involved collisions with 19 deaths and 238 injuries.

"We want motorists to exercise common sense and good judgment when calling 911 to report a suspected drunk driver," said Captain Lisa Solomon of the Paso Robles Police Department in a press release. "Under no circumstance should the public make an attempt to stop a vehicle or interact with a suspected drunk driver. If you suspect a drunk driver on the road, immediately call 911, and leave the enforcement action in the hands of trained professionals."

County law enforcement agencies are especially requesting that students help out in the campaign.

"It is an important task for citizens, but especially for students," Mott said. "We ask that students please refrain from driving under the influence, but report any suspicious driving on the city streets and highways as well."

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MENTOR, Ohio — An electrical tire that filled a department store with thick smoke didn’t deter holiday shoppers, and firefighters had to block the doors to keep customers from coming in, authorities said.

No one was injured in the tire at Dillard’s South at Great Lakes Mall on Wednesday, but some bargain hunters were inconvenienced.

“It was amazing,” said Mentor Fire Battalion Chief Joe Bishoe. “Even though there was heavy smoke in there, they all wanted to stay and shop. We even had to put people at the door to keep people from coming in.”

The tire burned circuits of a high-voltage electrical panel near a women’s dressing, firelighters said. It took them eight minutes to put it out.

CHESTERFIELD TOWNSHIP, Mich. — A man who police say tried to pass a counterfeited check at a Wal-Mart chose the wrong store at the wrong time.

Dozens of officers were at the suburban Detroit store Tuesday helping needy children pick out items as part of an annual “Shop with a Cop” charity event.

That didn’t stop Calvin E. Fluckers Jr., 21, from pulling into the parking lot next to 40 marked squad cars, police said. He apparently was unfazed by the police presence as he tried to pay for merchandise with a poorly photocopied check for $547.83.

The cashier called over a manager, who alerted one of the 80 officers who happened to be in the store.

“He was immediately apprehended,” Chesterfield Township police Lt. David Marker told the Detroit Free Press. “I can’t even imagine what he was thinking.”

Fluckers was arraigned Wednesday on one count of uttering and publishing. He was being held in the Macomb County Jail on $20,000 bail.

He could face up to 14 years in prison if convicted. The Detroit News reported.

FORT WALTON BEACH, Fla. — Paula Barstow’s singing Santa stopped singing after holiday vandals pulled out his power cord and ran over his head. Baby Jesus was also cut out of the Shalimar Presbyterian Church’s outdoor Nativity display.

“I hear all the time that Jesus has been taken out of everything and now he’s been taken out of his manger,” church elder Linda Shealy told the Northwest Florida Daily News.

Barstow said Santa was in his usual spot on her driveway Tuesday night. She awoke Wednesday and found him mowed down.

“They had to come all the way in and just run him over, back and forth,” said Barstow, who cried as she described the damage.

Santa “was a neat old guy,” she said. He also waved and shouted “Merry Christmas.”

Her husband, George, helped assemble the Nativity scene.

“People should be taught not to steal (anything), but don’t take the baby Jesus for crying out loud,” he said.
Santa's got a new home in front of the mission in downtown San Luis Obispo. Locals are invited to visit jolly Saint Nick until Christmas Day.

Josh Keane  
MUSTANG DAILY

Santa Claus arrived at Mission Plaza in a stylish convertible on Nov. 24 to set up shop until Christmas Eve.

He was greeted with a festival at Santa’s House that kicked off the Christmas season. The 50-piece San Luis Obispo County Band performed concert music and local shops Uptown Espresso and Sweet Shoppe provided refreshments.

Country radio station KJUG and Downtown Brown, a bear mascot for the Downtown Association, also dropped by the festivities.

Approximately 3,500 children visit Santa every year at the house, said Kristen Dennis, promotions director for San Luis Obispo’s Downtown Association. The small red house, which sits in the center of the plaza near the mission, is entering its 15th year in San Luis Obispo. It is the only permanent home for Santa in the city.

Dennis said visiting Santa’s House is a good way to get into the local Christmas spirit.

“It just seems right to have Santa downtown because (people) can visit Santa and then have lunch and go shopping,” she said. “It’s just a well-rounded experience.”

People of all ages are welcome to visit Santa this winter and are even allowed to bring their pets along. Dennis recalled that in 2005, someone brought their horse.

“Santa had to come out of the house to greet the horse. People want to get pictures with their pets,” she said with a laugh.

Visitors can also bring a wish list to their visit with Santa and it will be posted on the walls of Santa’s House. Dennis said by Christmas Day, the house is covered with lists.

“It’s so cute because kids ask for the funniest things. Some just want a scarf but others are like, ‘I want a PlayStation 2, I want a flatscreen TV. It’s funny,” Dennis said.

The house will be open from 5 to 8 p.m. on Thursdays, 2 to 5 p.m. on Fridays and 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekends. The house — and a carousel behind it — will be open the whole week leading up to Christmas Day.

Paints with Santa are $5. Each person who visits Santa receives a toy, candy cane and coloring book.

In addition to Santa’s House, the Downtown Association also hosted the 31st Annual Holiday Parade on Dec. 1. The event, which featured floats, marching bands and other exhibitions from local groups, draws thousands of spectators each year along Higuera Street.

Dennis, a Cal Poly alumna, said the parade has something for everyone.

“When I was a student at Cal Poly, I didn’t know about (the holiday parade). I wish I did because it’s really cool to see and experience,” Dennis said.

On Dec. 9, the Downtown Association showed a screening of the movie, “Polar Express” in the Downtown Centre Cinemas starting at 10 a.m.

Admission was free to children who brought canned food items. All proceeds from the event were donated to the SLO County Food Bank.

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President Bush’s dog Barney is back with holiday video extravaganza

WASHINGTON (AP) — Just in time for the holidays, America’s best-known Scottish terrier is back with a new video on the White House Web site. It’s “Barney’s Holiday Extravaganza,” a production that follows Barney around the White House as he plans a holiday show, runs into trouble developing a plot and then struggles over his budget with Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson and Budget Director Rob Portman.

The supporting cast includes President Bush, his wife, Laura, entertainers Dolly Parton, three-time Super Bowl champion and “Dancing with the Stars” winner Emmitt Smith, political strategist Karl Rove, Education Secretary Margaret Spellings, Press Secretary Tony Snow and others.

Miss Heazley, the Bushes’ other Scottish terrier, and the first cat, Willie, also make appearances.

To see the video, visit www.whitehouse.gov/holiday/2006/barney-cam.html.

This is the picture of a man to remember...a man who will do great things, is spilling over with potential, and who has captured my heart with his wit and charm. I’ll always support you Scott. I’m so proud of you. I know you will succeed in whatever you set out to accomplish. You’ve got the force and the some...Congratulations baby! I love you!

-Love Mango.

PS. Congrats Neftingikox! You are one of a kind Bryan...you and your comfy判决 floor rug! When I think of you I think of Family Guy. Keep smiling, it’s a good look on you. Future philosopher to be remembered Neftingikox...

"Can we finally retire now?" hah...Congratulations Scott we’re very proud of you.

Love Mom and Da

You survived radiation and darkness, pitchers of beer and margaritas, stress on shenanigans and physics defying tests, high times and Jewish times...all for a little piece of paper and ink. Congratulations! —Bryan

"I got some sheep, you want some wheat?" —Ariel

"I get some sheep, you want some wheat?" —Ariel

"It’s four shades darker!" —Ariel

Scott, don’t forget the shower. Congrats man... —Aaron

Scott dude, late, you are the man. Level 60 physics major. You school college in epic fashion on your green skeletal warhorse. Never forget to tip off your commitment to the high life. —Mike

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The player can eventually control ships from four different factions: The United Federation of Planets, the Klingons, the Romulans and the infamous half-person, half-machine and 100 percent evil Borg. Players can control all different types of ships. In the Federation, these range from models such as the Constitution class ship to the Galaxy-class ship. For the Borg, this ranges from the "Cube" to the much more innovative "Tactical Cube" — that looks much like the aforementioned cube, only covered in aluminum foil.

The graphics look a bit like the massively multiplayer online role-playing game " Eve." There are not-looking plans and some good-looking particle effects. The makers of the game, Bethesda Softworks, claim that "Star Trek: Legacy" will offer an immersion of the sort fans have not seen before. They promise lasers, phasers and much more that will cause explosions galore.

The new PS3 controller (it's exactly the same as the old one!) allows the player to control the tilts and turns of the plane in flight. If only there was something that would allow a player to do just that, only in an easier way — right, a joystick.

In essence, the player gets to fly around Europe completing objectives, bombing this and fighting that, while he keeps their team around him. This is the squadron they are referring to in the game title. How original.

In fact, this game isn't what you would call the latest innovation in gaming experience. What is the opposite of innovation? Oh, right:

"Blazing Angels: Squadrons of WWII."
Platform: Nintendo Wii
Genre: Adventure

In this anticipated Wii release from Konami, your job as the player is to hunt down Elebits: Creatures that look like a crack-addicted cross between the animals from "Where the Wild Things Are" and some of the weird stuff from "The Wizard of Oz."

Apparently, Elebits are creatures that produce light and energy, and they have decided to restore power in his house by shooting the Elebits with a joystick between the animals from "Where the Wild Things Are" and some of the weird stuff from "The Wizard of Oz."

So try it out, you might find that you like it just Elebit.

Other games to watch for:

This month will be a busy season for games for all the platforms. "State of War: Warmonger" will come out Dec. 8, while "Far Cry Vengeance" for the Nintendo Wii was just released. More-game games such as "The Ant Bully" and "Ice Age: The Meltdown" will appear on the Wii as well. Watch for "Star Wars: Lethal Alliance" on the Nintendo DS and "Blitz: Overtime" on the PSP.

The game has a few more than 20 levels that correspond to different areas of the house, and players use the gun to open doors, look under trash on the floor and everywhere else. Those Elebits can be hiding anywhere. As they are found and shot with the gun, the total energy in the room increases, turning on lights and restoring technology to mankind.

The graphics are kind of cartoonish, but that's to be expected from a game of this type. What is disappointing is that there isn't much movement required from the Wii controller. There is little slashing and much more work of a delicate nature that requires players to be careful in their movements.

But all in all, the intriguing game is definitely worth a second look. So try it out, you might find that you like it just Elebit.

Andy Medici
The Pitt News (Al of Pittsburgh)

As the holiday season kicks into high gear and two new consoles battle it out for world supremacy, it might seem impossible to unravel and separate the good games from the bad. So instead of studying for finals, take a look at some of the new games that will make your holiday experience a much less frustrating one.

From some new looks at old franchises to completely original creations, this December will be filled with not only holiday cheer, but a large assortment of electronic entertainment.

"Star Trek: Legacy"
Platform: PC, XBox 360
Genre: Real-time strategy

The newest in a long-standing and (hopefully not part of the long-disappearing) line of Star Trek games, "Star Trek Legacy" in particular promises its fans enough content to allow them to avoid homesc for days at a time.

The game spans a time ranging from the beginning of the Star Trek universe as explored in the show "Enterprise" to the bald-headed explorations of Patrick Stewart (Jean-Luc Picard) in "Star Trek: The Next Generation."


"Blazing Angels: Squadrons of WWII."
Platform: XBox, XBox 360, PS3
Genre: Flight Simulator

For the fans of you who bought the PlayStation 3 and did NOT immediately sell it for immense profit, "Blazing Angels: Squadrons of WWII" is everything you didn't want in this new system. Sure, the graphics are clean and pretty cool — you get to fly around Europe and it looks a lot like Europe — but that's pretty much it.

The new PS3 controller (it's exactly the same as the old one!) allows the player to control the tilts and turns of the plane in flight. If only there was something that would allow a player to do just that, only in an easier way — right, a joystick.

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"Ice Age: The Meltdown" will appear on the Nintendo DS and "Blitz: Overtime" on the PSP.
Limit snacks, divide workouts to avoid holiday weight gain

Eric Davis
(RAW TEXT NOT AVAILABLE)

As the semester ends and students begin to de-program from all the stress of finals week, fitness and exercise often get pushed to the back burner. However, there are ways everyone can stay fit and trim over the holidays. Rob Jewett, a certified personal trainer, has several ideas to battle the bulge over the break:

1. Determine your fitness level. It is not a good idea to try to do too much, Jewett said. For example, if you don't usually work out, start small with body-weight exercises and light jogging. If you are more experienced, try some weight training or push-ups.

2. Don't set unrealistic workout or diet goals. With the hustle and bustle of the holiday season, it is difficult to block off large amounts of time to work out. Workout time can accumulate, meaning three 10-minute workouts are equal to one 30-minute workout, he said.

3. Identify areas in which you can be more active. Barking farther away at the store, taking a few extra laps at the mall and drinking more water are great ways to maintain fitness. Usually when students go home, they eat more fast food than they do at school, Jewett said. Look for healthier menu items or avoid those types of restaurants altogether.

4. Don't skip meals. Many people skip lunch or breakfast in order to save room for dinner. This actually has the opposite effect, as the body slows the metabolism to preserve food, making you less hungry later in the day, Jewett said.

5. Control drinking and snacking. The holidays are great times to see old high school friends and family. Most of these reunions take place in social settings where alcohol is involved. For those who like mixed drinks, Jewett suggested drinking diet sodas rather than regular.

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Favorite holiday recipes

Potato Latkes
By Emily Rancer

6 Russet potatoes
1 onion
1/4 cup flour
2 tsp baking powder
1 tsp salt
1/4 tsp black pepper
1 Tbs oil
3 eggs
do for frying

In a food processor, grate potatoes (with skin) and onion. In a separate bowl, mix the rest of the ingredients together. Combine with potatoes and onions. Heat oil in a frying pan. Form palm-size balls of potato mixture and squeeze out excess juice. Place into pan and cook until golden brown. Flip and fry other side until golden brown. Makes about 20 latkes.

White Chocolate Peppermint Bark
By Jennifer Hall

2 lbs. white chocolate
1/2 lb. crushed peppermint (peppermint candy or candy canes)

Break white chocolate into small pieces. Melt chocolate in microwavable container stirring every 15 seconds. When chocolate is melted, stir in peppermint pieces.
Cover a cookie sheet with wax paper and pour chocolate and peppermint mix in until it is approximately 1/4 inch thick. Let cool at room temperature. When hard, break into bite-size pieces.
Nicole Small

When you were little, you probably gave your parents gifts like a still wet, glue-glittered plate that no one could eat off of — and your parents loved it. But now that you’re older, it’s usually more difficult to find a present that makes the same smash hit. Now that you’re a student living on a tight budget, another stress factor is keeping gifts as inexpensive as possible. This year, you’re looking for gifts as inexpensive as possible. This year, you’re thinking about giving your loved ones homemade items that anyone will appreciate.

Mom

1. Local: You don’t have to spend a fortune at Kay Jewelers this winter. How about carrying beautiful necklaces, bracelets and rings with most items costing $36 dollars and up.
2. Homemade: Take a favorite picture of you and your mother (or any picture) and buy a frame at Ross, located at 868 Higuera St. For a hint of creativity, write a message or poem on the back of it. Every time she looks at it, she will think of you.
3. No time: Visit www.frontgatemembered.com and check out their selection of lockets that cost $29.99. You can personalize them for around 6 $ get shipped to your home.

Dad

1. Local: For the meat-loving dads, head to The Old Country Deli at 600 Marsh St. They make 35 varieties of sausage and a pound of it will cost around $7. Meat can easily be transported this time of year.
2. Homemade: Why not make a calendar? Dad can put it up at the office or keep it at home, giving him 12 months of fun memories — a great alternative to a pair of socks. FedEx Kinko’s at 1127 Chorro St. can get your calendar back to you in 24 hours for the price of $19.99.
3. No time: for that real close memory on the back.

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Another Downtown San Luis Obispo home made are for those who have time and no time is, well, self-explanatory.

We’ve split them into three categories: local, homemade and no time. Local items are located at stores in and around downtown San Luis Obispo, home made are for those who have time and no time is, well, self-explanatory.

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Photo Illustration

Homemade calendars like this one are an easy gift that anyone will appreciate.

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Students studying at all hours of the night for their classes are turning to caffeine and energy pills that may be dangerous to their health.

Jessica Farkas

With finals and research paper deadlines quickly approaching, more students are trading their doctor-recommended eight hours of sleep for some newer techniques, which professionals say are more dangerous.

But when only 11 percent of students are getting adequate sleep, according to a Brown University study, many are disregarding the risks and wearing labels that coat the containers of caffeine and energy pills.

According to Heidi Riggenbach, head lab tech and biochemist at Barton Memorial Hospital in Tahoe, Nev., a cup of coffee contains about 110 milligrams of caffeine, while one caffeine pill contains almost double that.

"People think that because these caffeine pills are so readily available they must be safe," Riggenbach said. "But they really mess with your system."

Riggenbach said that if taken in improper amounts, caffeine could be harmful to a person's health. She said caffeine is highly addictive, especially when taken in large amounts.

Riggenbach warned that caffeine can cause headaches, dehydration and even depression.

For health ecology major Tommy Hays, those kinds of side effects help him refrain from taking these pills, but he said he knows several students who do use caffeine to help studying.

"I don't think it's uncommon at all," Hays said.

"Everyone is so stressed right now about how they're going to finish everything. You do what you got to do."

Kris Gunckel, manager of GNC in Reno, Nev., said that about half of his customers that ask for some type of energy boosting supplement are college students.

He said that many students ask for these pills as a means of higher energy while working out or to increase metabolism in order to lose weight, but said it could be possible that students are actually using them to stay awake at night.

"Either way, if they are taken properly and in the right dosage, the energy pills we provide are not unsafe," he said.

Gunckel said that students who do choose to take caffeine pills need to remember to drink excessive amounts of water because of how much sweat caffeine consumption creates. He also said that energy pills are not safe to consume for long periods of time.

Sandy Thomas, manager of Vivran and Ritalin, said that students who ask for these pills in general — they can make you really jittery and moody."

But highly caffeinated pills such as No-Dope and Vivran are available at local retailers, including the ASUN Bookstore and the DC Store on campus.

According to a recent test conducted by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse, as many as 20 percent of college students depend on these pills to help keep both themselves and their grades up.

Britney Christen, a 21-year-old major, said she isn't surprised by these statistics.

"We're under so much stress as college students, especially right now with finals," she said. "Sleep is a precious commodity that most of us can't afford."

But according to electroencephalogram technician Barbara Kafeman, students can't afford not to devote time to sleeping.

Kafeman monitors the brains of sleep-deprived people to learn exactly how the brain is affected.

"The brain electricity malfunctions when people are sleep deprived not only because it needs rest, but because you are depriving it of oxygen and glucose," she said.

"We're basically a bunch of walking batteries and when those electrical charges malfunction in the brain, it can cause huge problems."

Kafeman said that she has seen serious problems resulting from sleep deprivation.

"I've dealt with many people who have either lost consciousness or had seizures as a result of it," she said.

"You're stressing out your central nervous system and really — to put it in layman's terms — pissing off the brain."

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Excess caffeine endangers student health

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Britney Christen, a 21-year-old major, said she isn't surprised by these statistics.

"We're under so much stress as college students, especially right now with finals," she said. "Sleep is a precious commodity that most of us can't afford."

But according to electroencephalogram technician Barbara Kafeman, students can't afford not to devote time to sleeping.

Kafeman monitors the brains of sleep-deprived people to learn exactly how the brain is affected.

"The brain electricity malfunctions when people are sleep deprived not only because it needs rest, but because you are depriving it of oxygen and glucose," she said.

"We're basically a bunch of walking batteries and when those electrical charges malfunction in the brain, it can cause huge problems."

Kafeman said that she has seen serious problems resulting from sleep deprivation.

"I've dealt with many people who have either lost consciousness or had seizures as a result of it," she said.

"You're stressing out your central nervous system and really — to put it in layman's terms — pissing off the brain."

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