

Love partying? Enjoy going out for cocktail parties, dinners and attending weddings? Want to avoid putting on weight after a few of these soirees? **Nawaz Modi Singhania** tells you how.

**P**arties, parties and more parties! And one thing common about them is food and booze; always food and booze!

You are forever surrounded by mounds of desert, starters, heavy, oily food, alcohol, the list goes on.... These are capable of tempting even the most conscious, strong-willed dieter. So, are these supposed to be fun-filled evenings and occasions? Maybe. But for those who're trying to get that fat off and keep it off, they can be most stressful. An overdose is bound to knock any exercise and weight control routine right off its feet!

Let's face it. The odds aren't in your favour. But with a little careful handling, and some amount of jugglery, you can come out on top of this. Just follow these guidelines and see the difference.

#### Some Survival Tips

##### Have dinner before you go

If your dinner invitation says 8 p.m., that probably means that dinner won't be served till it's time for Cinderella's coach to turn into a pumpkin. As the evening drags on, even your fingernails will start looking appetising. Not good!

When you're hungry, you'll give in to eating anything.

But if you've nibbled before leaving the house, if you've had a sandwich, salad or soup, you'll be just fine. It'll curb the temptation of eating all those deep fried *kebabs* and mini pizzas drowned in melted cheese.

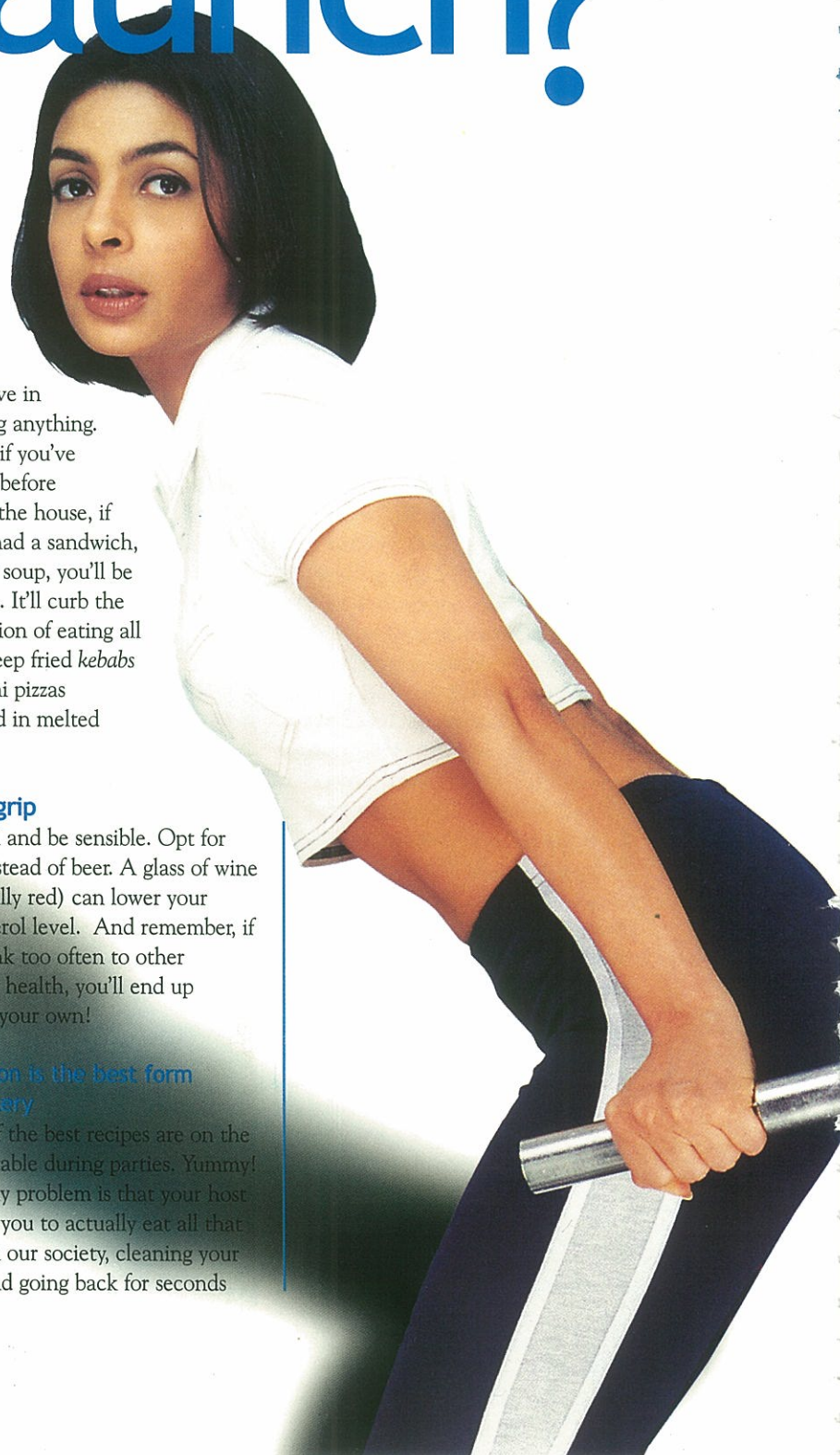
##### Get a grip

Get real and be sensible. Opt for wine instead of beer. A glass of wine (especially red) can lower your cholesterol level. And remember, if you drink too often to other people's health, you'll end up ruining your own!

##### Imitation is the best form of flattery

Some of the best recipes are on the dinner table during parties. Yummy! The only problem is that your host expects you to actually eat all that food! In our society, cleaning your plate and going back for seconds

# party paunch?



and thirds is the only way to say you enjoyed the meal. Great for the cooks ego; suicidal for your stomach and hips!

Instead, do the sneaky thing and ask your host for the recipe. Imitation is the best form of flattery. Your host will be thrilled that you loved the food so much, that you want to share it with others.

#### Score brownie points

Score points with the host by offering to bring along some appetisers of your own. Bring something that pleases both your taste buds, and your hips!

#### Compromise

If you know you're going to paint the town red that night, and will find it hard to resist all the yummys that go with it, try and stay lighter during the day. That way you won't feel so guilty come party time.

#### Tit bits

It's okay to try what looks yummy, but just take a bit, rather than going the whole hog. This way you'll cut down on the calories, but still please your taste buds.

#### If you're not part of the solution, then you're part of the problem!

At your own party, practice what you preach! Limit the number of appetisers you serve, and make sure you keep them as healthy as possible. Choose fresh veggies with light dips and slices of fruit, rather than deep-fried *bhajiyas* and cheese balls.

Serve dinner at a reasonable hour, and choose seafood or chicken (without the skin) rather than mutton, beef or pork.

If you're like a kitchen mouse, who likes nibbling away constantly while cooking, be smart about it. Keep healthy snacks like grapes or

## cut it out

Many standard recipes can be modified so that you can cut back on the fat, but not on the taste. Here are some ideas.

#### INSTEAD OF USING:

Eggs  
Cheese  
Whole milk  
Sour cream  
Oil  
Chocolate  
Meat  
bits.  
Mayonnaise  
(in salads)  
White bread

#### TRY USING:

Egg whites only (two egg whites for every whole egg)  
Light cheese  
No-fat milk  
Light sour cream or low fat yogurt  
Use less or no oil, and a non-stick pan  
Cocoa  
Use lean cuts. Use less and cut them up into small bits.  
Lighter salad dressings like olive oil or vinaigrette  
Whole grain bread

cucumber slices close at hand.

When it comes to dessert, make sure that you serve the same in prearranged bowls, so that they can be served in individual portions. If you're having a dinner for 12, make sure you have only 12 bowls, so there's no extra gooey chocolate cake to wake up to the next morning.

#### Stay active

Try to incorporate some additional activity to compensate for the hazards of the onslaught of the twilight hours. For instance, take the stairs instead of the elevator, or walk to work.

Short, effective workouts that combine cardiovascular activities and strength training can help raise energy levels, burn off fat, tone the body, alleviate stress and much more. Don't forget to warm up and cool down. Stay well hydrated. Keep sipping water during exercise, and drink plenty, both before and after.

Of course, if you have the time, then hit your local fitness centre. Sweat it out in the cardio studio, or target strength or resistance training. If you don't want to do an organised workout, then engage in any activity that you enjoy. If you feel like doing the salsa, or climbing up and down the stairs, that's fine too. Just enjoy whatever it is that you're doing. It's all about getting you activated!

#### Water baby

Drink as much water as possible. Water flushes out toxins from the body and is vital in weight reduction. Increasing your fruit and vegetable intake has the same impact on the body.

#### Put on your dancing shoes

If it's a dance party, then dance! You'll burn calories and become a better dancer! Practice makes perfect!

#### Healthy self-image

Almost everyone seems to have a problem with themselves! The thin think they're too thin, the fat think they're too fat, the short think they're too short, and the list goes on! These paranoias seem to peak in the party scenario, where people feel that they are more on display than otherwise. Go easy, and be good to yourself! Relax, and get comfortable with your body, and with who you are as a person. If you're overweight, stop wearing dark colours in the hope of looking thinner. You won't. You'll just look dreary and dull! Wear something that reflects your personality. Be the best that you can be, and be happy about it! ■

*(Nawaz Modi Singhania runs Body Art - a fitness centre with a variety of classes, gym facilities and training; tel: 022-380 5929/ 2602 - and is also a well-known fitness writer.)*