

▲ BONUS ▲
HEALTHY HEART
GUIDE

DECEMBER 04

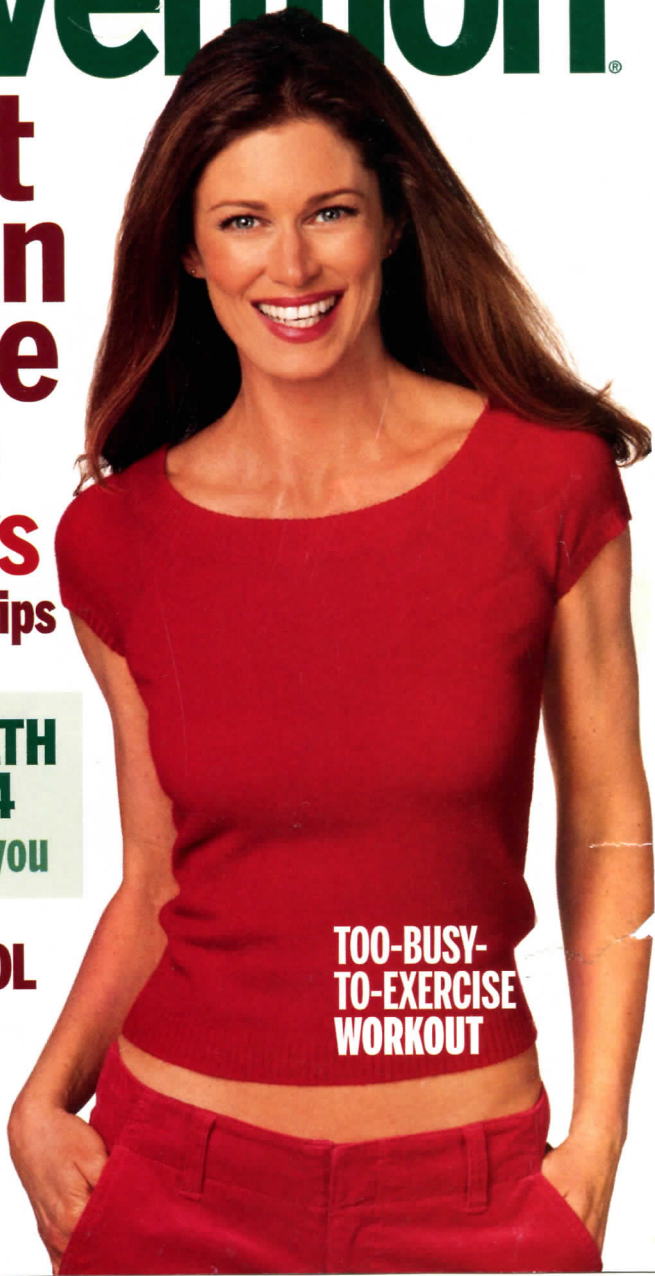
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**Don't
gain an
ounce
over the
Holidays**
10 smart, easy tips

**BIGGEST HEALTH
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What it means to you

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is key to
emotional
health

**TOO-BUSY-
TO-EXERCISE
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Healthy Kitchen Gear

Our top 10 picks for this holiday season BY SANDRA GORDON

Kitchen gadgets, like the vertical chicken roaster I received for Christmas last year, can seem like a lump of coal to the noncook. But to a foodie, they feed the soul. Upon unwrapping the steel contraption, I imagined the perfect roast chicken—with moist, tender meat and crispy skin—and kudos from friends and family (“This chicken is amazing!”). Okay, the chicken roaster wasn’t a gift certificate to a day spa, but to me, it wasn’t too far off.

For those on your list who truly love to cook, kitchen accoutrements are likely to elicit a similar reaction. To make your holiday shopping a snap, we assembled a lineup of our top kitchen picks. Bonus: These gadgets are not only good but also good for you. Consider this list a recipe for gift-giving success.

■ **Enjoy slow food** The dowdy slow cooker has given way to chic-looking “smart” pots like the high-tech Recipe Smart Pot by Rival (\$100), above. This one has more than 200 preprogrammed

recipes that are digitally stored in an electronic display. Slow cookers—so-called because they cook food at low temperatures over the course of several hours—can produce healthy meals that taste slaved over, such as savory and low-fat pork tenderloin and tomato-rich Chicken Provençal. Just add ingredients and select the cooking time and temperature on the touch pad. Other programmable cookers by Rival start at \$40.

■ **Give knives an edge** It sounds counter-intuitive, but sharp knives are safer than dull ones—because you don't have to apply as much pressure, there's less risk that the knife will slip and cut you. The three-stage Edge Select 120 White Professional Electric Sharpener by Chef's Choice (\$130) hones straight-edged and serrated knives using durable, 100% diamond-coated disks. You simply pass the knife through the slots consecutively; each stage uses precision angle guides to create increasingly razor-sharp edges.

Mince healthy herbs fast



A tough job made easy

■ **Section easily** The labor-intensive task of cutting up grapefruit keeps too many of us from eating this excellent source of vitamin C. (Just half a grapefruit provides 80% of the daily quota.) At the squeeze of a handle, the Grapefruiter by Chef'n (\$20), above, sections grapefruit in no time.

■ **Crank out herbs** Instead of seasoning food with fat or salt, add herbs. Many, such as rosemary and thyme, are respectable sources of flavonoids—potent cancer-fighting antioxidants that may also reduce the risk of heart attack. Simply turn the crank, and Williams-Sonoma's Stainless Steel Herb Mill (\$20), left, gently minces fresh, leafy herbs to release their flavor, saving you the chore of chopping.

■ **Use the anti-germ tool** To obliterate nasty microbes such as salmonella and *E. coli* O157:H7, you need to cook ground beef until the interior temperature reaches 160°F (170° for pork and game, 180° for a whole chicken, with probe inserted into thigh). Polder's Programmable Thermometer with Timer (\$30) can help any home chef ensure meat is a done (not overdone) deal. Its digital probe displays a food's internal

temperature and sounds an alarm when it reaches the preprogrammed mark, safe and savory.

■ **Get steamed** The Two-Tier Steel Steamer by Norpro (\$14) can steam two veggies at once (getting you closer to the healthy nine-a-day produce requirement). Durable and rust-resistant, it's just 4 inches high, so you don't need an extratall pot. Steaming vegetables until they're just crisp and tender is an excellent way to retain water-soluble nutrients, such as vitamins B and C. Steam with chicken broth instead of water for a flavor bonus.



The cedar plank adds flavor

■ **Grilling Nemo** A novel tool for cooking fatty fish such as salmon—which is high in heart-healthy omega-3 fatty acids—these Cedar Barbecue Planks by Pacific Northwest Fine Food Products (\$13 for six), above, imbue a slightly smoky flavor. Just wet the plank, plunk the fish on top and place it on a grill. Cooking may take a little longer because wood doesn't conduct

heat as quickly as metal. But the fish will be moist and succulent, with a woodsy tang that's well worth the wait.

■ **Clean greens machine** Salads are a tasty way to sneak more vegetables into your diet. And they'll be extra healthy if, after rinsing greens, you dry them in a salad spinner. A powerful pump at the top of Oxo's Good Grips Salad Spinner (\$25) employs centrifugal force to slough water off greens quickly.

Result: You use less salad dressing (because dressing adheres better to dry leaves) and consume fewer calories.

■ **Mince garlic with no mess** Williams-Sonoma's Garlic Genius (\$30) minces garlic cloves with a twist of the wrist, the way a pepper mill grinds. Research suggests that garlic may help lower total and LDL ("bad") cholesterol, so twist away. The mincer is dishwasher safe for easy cleanup.

■ **Keep chicken upright** The Vertical Roaster by Spanek (\$20) suspends your bird during roasting, enlisting gravity to encourage fat and grease to collect at the bottom of the pan. Meat turns out tender and juicy, while skin sizzles to a golden crisp. But skip the skin—it's high in fat. Bah humbug? Okay, try just a nibble. The holidays are time for a small exception.

Sandra Gordon is a freelance writer and author of *The 30 Secrets of the World's Healthiest Cuisine*.

■ quick tip

These gifts are available where kitchen gadgets are sold, such as www.williams-sonoma.com, www.cooking.com, and www.surlatable.com.