

Stress Control *for the* Holidays



The holidays can be an extremely busy time of year. It's easy to get caught up in the activities of the season, such as buying and wrapping gifts, writing and mailing cards, baking treats, attending holiday events, participating in traditions, and hosting your own gatherings. One can often end up feeling overwhelmed, exhausted and unhappy. Here are some helpful tips to manage stress during this time of year.

Be Organized

- Make a prioritized daily or weekly to do list of what you want to get accomplished.
- Decide who you will give gifts to and what you want to give.
- Shop early for the best selection and to avoid crowds.
- Start holiday projects well in advance to allow time for unexpected delays.
- Make a calendar to keep track of family activities.
- Keep a few extra wrapped gifts on hand for last minute needs.

Control Your Budget

- Establish a realistic budget and stick to it.
- Draw names for a gift exchange. This works well for large families, a group of friends or co-workers.
- Give baked goods or handmade crafts as gifts.
- Use the Internet to your advantage. Read product reviews and find the best price for the items you want to buy.

Keep it Simple

- Share cooking responsibilities, host a potluck or use a catering service for holiday meals and events.
- Take advantage of any gift-wrapping services stores may offer.
- Shop on the Internet or from mail-order catalogs.
- Plan quick and easy meals, and make extra to freeze for another time.

Take Care of Yourself

- Stick to your exercise routine.
- Eat healthy foods, including fruits, vegetables and whole grains.
- Relax with music, a warm bath, yoga, or massage therapy.
- Get seven to eight hours of sleep each night.
- Don't feel guilty about saying no to some of your holiday invitations.

The holidays don't have to be stressful. By planning ahead, staying organized and taking care of yourself, you can fit in the extra activities of the season without the added stress.



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