



The ultimate guide to a
Healthier Holiday

The holidays can truly be the most wonderful time of the year. Unfortunately, this season can also take a toll on everyone. With the hustle and bustle, winter weather and loads of parties, the holidays can wreak havoc on all aspects of your health.

One of the best ways to stay healthy during this busy season is to be intentional about your healthy habits. Yes, it's important to enjoy the season! But keep in mind that there are things you can do to stay physically, mentally, financially and emotionally healthy even amidst the flood of holiday cheer.

Physical Health

It's easy to see how wine, turkey and stuffing can damage your physical health. With delicious treats at every turn, there are a ton of ways to abandon the healthy diet you've maintained throughout the year.

Aside from your diet, the holiday season is also a tempting time to snuggle up indoors instead of getting your usual workout in. Even if you find the discipline to keep up with all of your healthy habits, you're still going up against cold and flu season.

So how can you stay physically health in the face of holiday treats, snuggly blankets and nasty germs?

When it comes to nutrition...

Eat beforehand. Take the time to eat a balanced meal before making your appearance at holiday parties. This will help you to avoid snacking on the tempting treats and hors d'oeuvres. It'll also ensure you keep your meal routine intact.

Bring healthy dishes. Sometimes it seems easier to grab a bag of chips on the way to a potluck dinner. If you bring a healthy meal, though, you can be sure you'll have at least one healthy option to fall back on.

Avoid drinking your calories. It's easy to forget that alcohol can wreck your otherwise healthy eating habits. Be aware of how many fancy drinks you consume in the midst of all the celebration.

Taste dessert. But don't overindulge! Denying yourself your favorite treats is a miserable way to show your holiday spirit. It can also lead to overindulging on those treats later. Don't feel bad about sneaking a taste of your favorite desserts and sweet treats.

Plan your meals. Set a menu for your holiday dinners and stick to it. Try not to let last minute requests or cravings throw you off. It's really not necessary to have 5 different kinds of potatoes...





When it comes to exercise...

Schedule your workout. This means set aside time to do it and planning what you're going to do. If it's all set out ahead of time, it's an easier task to take care of.

Do the little things. Get your exercise in during other tasks. Take some extra laps when you're Christmas shopping at the mall. Park far away from the entrance to the grocery store. Opt for the stairs at work. These things definitely add up.

Make goals. To help you focus on fitness, make some extra goals to accomplish this holiday season. Whether it's signing up for a race in January, or aiming to lose those last five pounds, goals give you something to focus on.

Find a partner. Or a group works, too! Find someone to hold you accountable. If you can't find someone who will work out with you, find someone who will ask how your workouts are going.



When it comes to illness...

Stay hydrated. This is helpful on all physical health fronts. In the busy-ness of the holiday season, it's easy to forget to drink water. Focus on hydration as a constant in the madness of the season.

Stay warm. Don't forget to bundle up. It might seem like an extra step, but it's very important to take the time to don a coat, hat and gloves before leaving the house in the winter cold.

Be cautious. It's cold and flu season. You want to spend time in close quarters with loved ones, but be aware of the germs that could spreading. Try to carry extra hand sanitizer and wash your hands often. If you do start to feel sick, try to stay home so you don't infect your loved ones.



Mental Health

Many people feel like they're losing their minds this time of year. Don't worry. It's completely normal. The time from Thanksgiving through the New Year can fly by, leaving you feeling as though there aren't enough hours in a day.

Organization and stress management are two ways to tackle the madness that comes during the holiday season. Get these two in check to make it actually feel like the most wonderful time of the year.



When it comes to organization...

Break things up. Smaller projects are much easier to take care of than huge ones. Rather than being overwhelmed by the bigger picture, keep your eye on the details. You'll feel more productive, and odds are you won't miss the little things.

Live by to-do lists. Really. They can be lifesavers! Take the time to make a to-do list either on your smartphone or with pen and paper. You'll love the feeling of checking things off as you go along.

Start with a clean slate. Before the craziness sets in, clean and organize all the supplies you need. For some this means organizing the kitchen, for others maybe the gift-wrap closet. Either way, start the holidays on the right foot.

Start early. If you're worried there aren't enough hours in a day, just give yourself more days to get things done. It really does help to get a jump on things, even if October doesn't feel quite like holiday season.

Stash away supplies. Whether you need an abundance of flour and sugar, or a ton of tape and bows, stash your supplies in a place that's easy to get to. It helps even more if your stash is clean and organized itself.



When it comes to stress...

Meditate. You don't have to be a professional yogi to take time to just breathe. Sometimes it takes extra effort to slow your mind and body down for just a minute, but it can really help you to rejuvenate.

Skip the obligations. Let's face it. Some parties and holiday events are only on your calendar because you feel obligated to go. Skip them! If it's not something you even remotely want to do, don't waste your time.

Just say no. Only you can tell when you've taken on too much. If you get to that point, don't feel bad saying no. You can only do so much, and odds are everyone else is in the same boat. They'll definitely understand!

Focus on memories. The tasks and to-do lists might seem daunting, but don't let them become the center of your holidays. Focus on the memories you're making rather than just the things you're getting done.

Financial Health

The price of gifts, food and travel can definitely add up and drain your bank account. A lot of people get sucked into the material madness that surrounds the holidays (Black Friday, anyone?). But the truth is, that's simply not the point. You can stay financially healthy through the holiday season.

Set a budget. Don't just shop blindly. Budget what you're willing to spend on food, travel and gifts each year. The secret here is actually sticking to that budget!

Shop early. Holiday sales have crept earlier and earlier into the year. Take full advantage! Shop around at different stores or online to make sure you're getting the best deal possible.

Make a list. And stick to your list! It's tempting to go shopping with the idea that you'll know the perfect gift when you see it. That attitude makes it so much easier to feel pressured into buying things you don't need. Before you leave the house, make a list of what you need, and try your best not to stray from it.

Make homemade gifts. It's not just for children. With the power of Pinterest on your side, homemade gifts can be an excellent option to save a little cash this holiday season.

Set rules. In certain gift exchanges, it's perfectly acceptable to set rules. Talk with the other people involved and set a price limit so nobody feels pressured to splurge on expensive gift items.

Buy in bulk. This works best for things like baking supplies and gift wrap. If there is something you either know you'll need a lot of, or can use extra of later in the year, buy it in bulk.



Emotional Health

It's no secret that the holidays can be an emotional time. Some are filled with joy, others are missing loved ones, still others are celebrating and some are just struggling to get by. Everyone has a different approach—and therefore different feelings about—the holidays.

It's easy to let your rush of feelings drain you. It can even be draining to balance your emotions with the emotions of those around you. If you're not intentional about your emotional health, you might end up struggling through this season.



When it comes to spirituality...

Be respectful. Many people celebrate many different holidays this time of year. Even people celebrating the same holidays might do so differently. Respect everyone else's traditions as best you can.

Focus on you. Enjoy the holiday traditions that you and your loved ones hold dear. While this season is an excellent time for giving and spreading the love with others, it's never the time to criticize someone different than you.

Don't force the topic. Religion and spirituality can be a sensitive subject, especially during the holidays. It's important to be proud of and share your traditions with people who are interested. But the holidays aren't about debating one practice against another.



When it comes to your sanity...

Have patience. That is, have as much patience as possible. When things seem to get frazzled, take a few extra seconds before losing your cool.

Get enough sleep. Crazy idea, right? When things get busy, sleeping habits are usually the first to go. Don't let that happen this holiday season by prioritizing sleep.

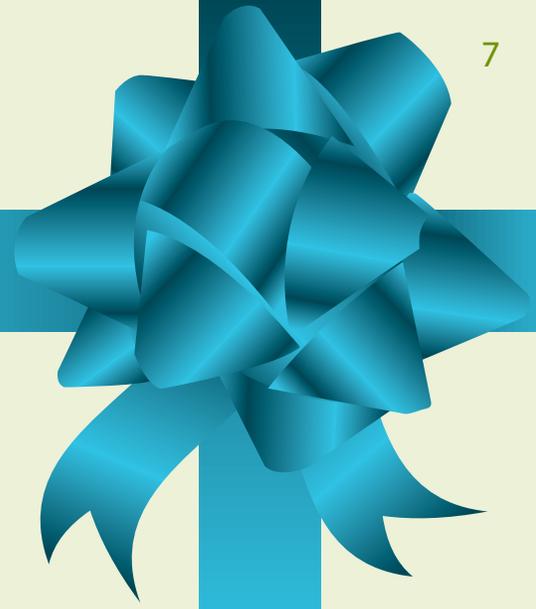
Avoid alcohol. Drinking lots of alcohol can not only mess with your mood, but can leave you feeling sick and unproductive for an entire day afterwards. You don't have to cut out every celebratory drink, but definitely be mindful!

Focus on the people you're with. It might be difficult, but try not to let your mind wander to the other things you need to get done. When you're spending time with loved ones, really be there and only there mentally.

Respect those who grieve. The holidays can be very hard for people who've lost loved ones. It's a reminder of who is not present. Be sensitive to them, and anyone who doesn't seem to enjoy the holidays as much as others.

Spend time alone. No matter where you have to squeeze it in. Sometimes it's as simple as driving separately to a family event. Getting your alone time can help you re-energize so you can really enjoy your loved ones.

A Gift for You!



Let's face it. The holidays are hard. Handle this busy season like a pro by being intentional about all aspects of your health.

Take these downloadable tips about physical, mental, financial and emotional health back to your friends, family, co-workers, and every human going through the holiday craziness.

Spread the word and have a happy holiday!

Physical Health



Mental Health



Financial Health



Emotional Health



TotalWellnessHealth.com

