

HANDLING HOLIDAY STRESS

What Stress You Out Most About the holidays :

Holiday Tips :

1.	2.
3.	4.

How can you avoid the stress of holiday shopping? :

What are 3 Tips for Eating Healthy Around the Holidays?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What are 3 Strategies to a Healthier Holiday you want to Implement? :

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Notes:



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WORKING OUT DURING THE HOLIDAYS

GET OUT THERE

Snuggling under the blankets with a mug of hot chocolate is fine and dandy, but it probably won't help you out in the fitness department. Instead of baking cookies or playing board games, pass the time with an active pursuit like snowshoeing, hiking, or even building snowmen or igloos.

FIND A WORKOUT BUDDY

Rolling out of bed for a 6 a.m. gym sesh is much harder to skip when you're one half of a dynamic workout duo. Enlist a fitness-minded friend or family member (especially if you're traveling) to be your holiday exercise buddy. Encourage each other to lace up the sneakers for pre-dinner workouts and post-shopping trip runs.

TREAT YO SELF

No, not to that extra slice of pumpkin pie. If it's within your budget, indulge in new workout clothing or fitness equipment before Thanksgiving to boost motivation throughout the holiday season.

INCLUDE EVERYONE

With friends and family in town and vying to spend time together, plan walks, hikes, or gym sessions together. This way you can continue to spend time with your loved ones and get your workout in.

PARK FAR AWAY

With a mile-long to-do list before the big holiday get-together, there's just no time for exercise, right? Wrong-o: Simply lace up your sneakers and powerwalk between errands. (This is especially doable at a mall or shopping center.)

DO SOME YARDWORK

Whether it's raking leaves or shoveling snow, yard work is an unexpected way to get the heart rate up and work out major muscle groups.





Tips for Coping with Holiday Stress

THE WELLNESS COUNCIL OF ARIZONA

REMEMBER THAT MOST FAMILIES ARE FAR FROM PERFECT

Social scientists have reported that 85 percent of families are dysfunctional in some way, making it the norm to be considered a dysfunctional family. To quote Mary Karr, "I think a dysfunctional family is any family with more than one person in it." Rather than feeling embarrassed by your family's eccentricity, try to embrace it and keep it in perspective. If you have reason to be concerned that the situation will truly get terrible for anyone, try to have a backup plan such as leaving early or separating to take a walk and returning after a break.

FOCUS ON THINGS YOU REALLY ENJOY

Likely some of your traditions are meaningful and fun, while others are just done because that's the way it's always been. Consider letting go of the routines that don't really add much to your holiday experience and just add to your exhaustion.

TAKE TIME TO RELAX

Play with your kids, cuddle with the pets, or spend time alone if that's what it takes. A constantly busy schedule is not relaxing for most people, so try to plan some down time for yourself.

PRACTICE GRATITUDE

Everyone has someone or something to be grateful for. Try not to take anything for granted. Even if you are missing someone this season, be grateful for the people that are with you.

SPREAD OUT FAMILY VISITS

Don't try to visit the whole family on the same day. This can create too much stress for everyone involved, especially if you have young children. I have worked with young couples for whom both sets of parents are divorced. Taking the children to see all of the grandparents can mean four homes to visit, which is about three too many for any one day.

CHANGE IT UP

Try something new and easier. If you are the host for the holiday, simplify the meal plan or ask everyone to pitch in and contribute something. A celebration is always better when the hosts are happy too.

BE MINDFUL OF WHAT YOU ARE CELEBRATING

It might be a holy day, a day off from work, or a chance to see friends and family. Celebrate something, and focus on the people who are with you at this time in your life. Life is very precious and worth celebrating, even with all of its imperfections.



Striving Through the Holidays

TAKE TIME EVERY DAY TO ENJOY SOMETHING ABOUT THE SEASON

It's easy to get caught up in the busyness of decorating and shopping and baking and wrapping. But are you enjoying any of it? Stop. Breathe. Take a few minutes to enjoy the decorations on the lampposts or to really look at the lights. Savor one of the cookies. Inhale the warm smells coming from your oven. Wrapping a gift can be just another chore or it can be a way to quietly celebrate what the intended receiver means to you.

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

We should do this all the time but it's especially important to get enough sleep, to eat right, and to get some exercise every day when stressed. Self-care is not an "extra," even though it may seem to take too much time. Time invested in yourself each day will more than pay off in your general sense of well-being throughout the season.

EVERYTHING IN MODERATION

Be mindful of your own tipping points when it comes to holiday indulgences. You already know your limits for alcohol and sweets, but also be sure to limit your time at parties and with your family so you won't develop harsh feelings.

BE GRATEFUL

Research has shown that taking the time to be grateful every day has enormous physical and mental health benefits. It helps build our immune systems, keeps us in touch with the positive aspects of life, and connects us with others. So keep a holiday gratitude journal. From now until the New Year take a few minutes every day to write down at least three things you are grateful for. They don't have to be huge events. Sure. If you win the lottery tomorrow, you can be grateful for that. But short of such a windfall, we can be grateful for having enough food to eat or for getting a phone call from a friend or for the neighbor whose holiday lights make us smile.

Treat Yo'Self

DO RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS

Get into the season of giving. Let someone else have that parking space near the store. Compliment the harried store clerk. Let the mom who is shopping with kids go ahead of you in line. Be generous with street musicians. Doing good will make you feel good – or at least better.

GIVE YOURSELF PERMISSION TO LET SOME THINGS GO

Take a moment each morning to gather your thoughts. Make a list of all the things you have to do and want to do. Check off the two or three items that are really important to you. Let yourself entertain the idea of letting go of many of the others – or at least reducing them in some way. Many of us make our own stress by buying into the “have to’s.”

GIVE YOURSELF A PRESENT

One of the top killers of holiday enjoyment is becoming so wrapped up in planning the best holiday experience that you lose the ability to experience the good moments that happen in the present. While you worry about whether everyone is happy with the meal, if anyone is fighting about politics, or if the kids are eating too much sugar, you miss the powerful, gratifying moments that make the holidays magical. One great way to start embracing the present moment is by taking a few minutes to find one thing you feel good about right now, and then lingering on that thought for as long as you can. When you stop trying to make your holiday fit an ideal, you open up space to savor the holiday as it is.

PROTECT YOUR SLEEP

Few things consistently mess with people's emotional and physical health like chronic sleeplessness and poor sleep. It leads to weight gain, additional stress, and irritability. Most of us sleep less well this time of year whether from staying out late at parties or leaving all the gift-wrapping until the last minute. Cut back on caffeine (and eliminate it entirely after 2 PM), and lay off the eggnog before bed. Skipping naps, especially the ones that find you sprawled on the couch after a big meal, will improve your ability to fall asleep at night. And though it's tempting, take a pass on the goodies in the cabinet or leftovers in the fridge for at least three hours before bed. That way, heartburn, indigestion, or a sugar headache won't keep you awake.