



Holiday Stress Tips

BUDGETING FOR THE HOLIDAYS

- * As early as you can in the New Year, work out a rough budget of expected holiday costs. Don't forget 'hidden' expenses such as food bills and overseas telephone calls
- * Calculate how much disposable income you have between now and the holidays. A certain percentage of this can be dedicated each week to covering your expected costs.

PRESENTS

If you have a large circle of extended family or friends for which to buy gifts, it can be very costly. You might be able to reduce the stress and cost for everyone if you suggest a change in the way you exchange presents. Things to suggest:

- * Buy presents only for the children
- * Do a gift exchange, everyone draws a name
- * Set a limit on the costs of presents

HOLIDAY SHOPPING

- * Make a list of all the gifts you wish to buy before you go shopping. If you wait for inspiration to strike, you could be wondering aimlessly around the shopping centers for hours.
- * Buy a few extras, such as candles, just in case you forget somebody or have unexpected guests bearing gifts.
- * If possible, do your shopping early
- * Buy your gifts online. Some companies even gift-wrap

RELATIONSHIPS

- * Don't expect miracles. If you and certain family members bicker all year long, you can be sure there'll be tension at holiday meals.
- * Avoid known triggers.
- * Use relaxation techniques such as deep breathing to cope with anxiety or tension.

THE LITTLE EXTRAS

- * Try to be moderate – the season may be jolly but too much food and alcohol is harmful, and drunk driving is a real danger and illegal.
- * Get enough sleep – plan for as many early nights as you can
- * Keep moving- keeping up with your regular exercise routine can give you the fitness and stamina to make it through the demands of the festive season.

NUTRITION FOR DEPRESSION & ANXIETY

Foods That Can Help Combat Anxiety

- ✓ Foods rich in zinc such as beans, lentils, pumpkin seeds, yogurt, whole grains, vegetables, and egg yolks have been linked to lower anxiety.
- ✓ Omega-3 rich foods have been shown to help reduce anxiety. Salmon, ground flaxseed, walnuts, and hemp seeds are rich sources of omega-3 fatty acids.
- ✓ Foods rich in B vitamins can also help reduce anxiety. Avocado, almonds and mushrooms are a few excellent choices.
- ✓ Avoiding refined flours, sugar and caffeine can help reduce anxiety and blood sugar swings. Instead focus on foods that provide sustained energy such as high fiber whole grains, legumes, vegetables, fruit, nuts and seeds, and good quality lean protein.

Are Antioxidants Anti-Anxiety?

Anxiety is thought to be correlated with a lowered total antioxidant state. It stands to reason, therefore, that enhancing your diet with foods rich in antioxidants may help ease the symptoms of anxiety disorders. Below is a list of foods that contain high levels of antioxidants:

- ✓ Beans: Red, pinto, black, kidney
- ✓ Fruits: Apples (Gala, Granny Smith, Red Delicious), prunes, sweet cherries, plums, black plums
- ✓ Berries: Blackberries, strawberries, cranberries, raspberries, blueberries
- ✓ Nuts: Walnuts, pecans
- ✓ Vegetables: Artichokes, kale, spinach, beets, broccoli





Tips to Manage Your Time

Have you ever wondered how it is that some people seem to have enough time to do everything that they want to, whereas others are always rushing from task to task, and never seem to finish anything? Time management is not very difficult as a concept, but it's surprisingly hard to do in practice. It requires the investment of a little time upfront to prioritize and organize yourself.

Put a Time Limit on Tasks

Set time constraints on items that you know take longer than it should or on tasks that you get easily distracted doing. You will focus more and work more efficiently. If you still find yourself going beyond these time limits, examine your workflow and eliminate little time-wasters like unscheduled breaks.

Keep Things Tidy

For some of us, clutter can be both a real distraction and genuinely depressing. Tidying up can improve both self-esteem and motivation. You will also find it easier to stay on top of things if your work space is tidy.

Complete Important Tasks in the Morning

Most of us find our first hour of the work the most productive - make sure to use yours wisely! Oddly enough, you can focus more easily when your brain isn't fully awake. Booting-up brains have less excess energy for daydreaming and worrying about other tasks.

Don't Get Hung Up on Small Details

Instead of indulging in perfectionism, keep the big picture in mind. Focus on your priorities, not the minute details of your work. Address the most important tasks on your to-do list and don't sweat the small stuff.

Schedule Breaks

The human brain can only focus for about 90-minutes at a time. Schedule a break at least every 90 minutes to avoid burnout and maintain high productivity throughout your day.

Make the Most of Waiting

It happens to everyone: we wait in lines, waiting rooms, airport terminals, train stations, etc. Answer emails on your phone, catch up on missed phone calls, stretch/exercise, relax or meditate. Carry a book/Kindle with you and read. Listen to podcasts on your phone. Don't let unexpected queues catch you unprepared.

Organize Your Email

People with cluttered inboxes spend so much time on email than others. The best way to speed up email communication and waste less time on superfluous exchanges is to organize your inbox. Most emails offer a variety of organizational tools, so choose the one that works best for you.

Exercise

Sports help you handle everyday stressors. Researchers have shown that short and intense exercise sessions can be as beneficial as longer ones. Set some time aside for short workouts - at least every other day.

Sleep Well

Scientists have found that sleeping less to create more task-oriented time leads to trouble. Tired people procrastinate more and get distracted easily. Give your brain at least eight hours of sleep every night.

Use Your Calendar

A calendar is good for so much more than just scheduling meetings. Use your calendar to keep track of deadlines, block times off for focused work, and automatically add locations to events. Take responsibility for your time. If you think that a scheduled entry will not advance your plan for the day, just cancel it.

Schedule Relaxation Time

Spend some time in quiet everyday and turn off your "work brain". You will be surprised about the positive effects some quiet time can have on your creative processes. Meditation helps you adopt a fresh eye and gain new insights about your work.

Learn to Say No

Your time is precious. Don't waste it on people and projects that don't align with your mission and goals. Instead of automatically accepting invitations and offers, say, 'I'll check my schedule and get back to you'. This simple phrase will buy you time to evaluate offers and make smart decisions.



Wellness Council of Arizona
(520) 293-3369 | contactewelcoaz.org