

9 Tips to Fend Off Holiday Stress



The holidays are a time for family and cheer, but making sure the house is clean, the food is ready, and the presents are wrapped and ready to be opened can be overwhelming. These factors can bring unwanted stress and depression in a time meant for happiness.

Through the endless parties, cooking, shopping and cleaning, try taking one of 9 steps to ensure you have a stress-free holiday:

1. Plan ahead.

Between co-workers, friends and family, it's inevitable that some commitments will end up on the same day. Make sure to plan on what you can attend in person or virtually. If you're hosting the holidays, create a menu to help you stay organized and make grocery shopping easier.

2. Say no.

With holiday commitments, it is OK to say no to a few or all of them. It also will help relieve some stress. Try sharing your to-do list with other family members.

3. Plan spending.

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The holidays mean spending money. Make a budget and stick to it. Spending money on your loved ones is important, but it's also important to pay your energy bill. Don't buy gifts that you'll be paying off for the rest of the year.

4. Create relaxing surroundings.

Turn on some music, light some candles or open the windows on a sunny day. Research has found that listening to music and the scent of citrus can boost feelings of well-being, and vitamin D is always a happiness booster.

5. Maintain healthy habits.

The holidays are notorious for ruining healthy habits. A short workout each morning will help your decision-making throughout the day. Encourage your family to try snowshoeing or sledding to get in extra exercise. Eat healthy snacks like fresh fruit or vegetables throughout the season and to fill up before a dinner party or celebration with tempting, but unhealthy, foods.

6. Share feelings.

Spending a holiday after a loss in the family can be difficult. Accept your feelings and open up about them to others. It may make you feel better to share. Try to switch up old traditions to ease the loss.

7. Respect differences.

Family members will have different viewpoints than your own. Try your best to forgive and forget this holiday season. Focus on your similarities, and replace tension with something productive.

8. Be realistic.

You are only one person, and you can only do so much. Be realistic with how much you can handle this season. Forget about perfection, and relax and enjoy the company surrounding you.