

Ten Top Tips for Healthy Holiday Stress Relief

While “over the river and through the woods to Grandmother’s house” may sound fun, excessive holiday stress and post-holiday depression can seriously undermine your health, happiness and finances.

So try these holiday stress tips to help you have a healthy holiday.



- 1. Take charge of your holiday.** Hospital emergency room and police reports show more sickness, addiction, criminal activity and mental suffering during holidays. So make a list and simplify.
- 2. Always put yourself first.** It’s not selfish. Taking care of yourself is an essential part of taking care of others. Rethink the holidays with your well-being in mind. Plan ahead and do what works best for you.
- 3. All foods fit.** The holidays don’t have to be all or none in regard to food options. Balanced eating includes sometimes choosing apple pie and sometimes enjoying an apple.
- 4. Joyful Movement for stress relief.** Walking is an excellent **way to relieve anxiety** and stress. If weather isn’t conducive to a walk, go to the mall and weave your way around all the busy harried shoppers.
- 5. Take time to rest and relax.** Get a **good night’s sleep**, stretch, practice deep breathing and listen to soothing music. Slowing down can actually give you more holiday energy.
- 6. Rein in excess shopping.** Don’t go crazy indulging everyone’s whims. Shop on the Internet and limit your gift-giving to a special few. Happy holiday memories are built on time spent with loved ones.
- 7. Say “No thank you” often.** Be kind but firm and people will learn to accept turned-down obligation invitations. And if they don’t, that’s their problem. Only say “yes” to what you really want to do.
- 8. Keep an attitude of gratitude.** Staying positive is important to **stress management**. Make a daily list of what you’re grateful for.
- 9. Create your balanced holiday.** You don’t have to be a slave to holiday traditions. Keep those that work for you and discard the rest. You can always share yourself through e-mails and pictures.



10. Give the gift of joy and love. Holiday stress often puts people in a rotten mood. If you're happy and vibrating with joyful holiday spirit, you'll help others to have a happy healthy holiday spirit too.

Whether your holidays are the best or worst of times is up to you. Follow these ten healthy holiday stress tips for depression and holiday stress relief and have happy healthy holiday seasons for years to come.



What are the holiday blues?

For some of us, the holidays can be a depressing time when we get the holiday blues. Feelings of sadness, loneliness, and anger can intensify when contrasted with the joy expected of the holidays.

How do I cope with the holiday blues?

- Try something new. Take a vacation with a family member or friend.
- Spend time with people who care about you.
- Volunteer your time to help others. Spending time with those in need can help you feel less isolated.
- If you are religious, take time to reflect on the spiritual significance of the holidays.
- Try to appreciate the good things you have now instead of focusing on the past.
- Move your body in enjoyable ways. Get out. Go for a walk. Window shop.
- Accept all feelings including those of sadness or loneliness. Feelings may feel stronger due the holidays and the memories of holidays gone by.
- Set a realistic budget and stick with it.
- Minimize alcohol consumption.
- Consider a balance between time to reflect and time to socialize.
- Create a space for reflecting/honoring/grieving things that have changed since last holidays.

References

- American Heart Association. Holiday Stress? Try Our Top 5 Tips for a Heart-Healthy Holiday Season Accessed 3/30/2016.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Managing Stress Accessed 3/30/2016.