



10 TIPS TO BEAT HOLIDAY STRESS

Take note of a few tips to get through the holidays comfortably and contentedly:

1. **BE REALISTIC** – Neither you, nor your holiday has to be perfect. Consider your expectations and remain flexible.
2. **PRACTICE ACCEPTANCE** – Some degree of anxiety is “normal”, healthy, and motivating. Think of it like a wave of the ocean; allow it to come in and ride it out.
3. **CHANGE YOUR THOUGHTS** – We all worry about things we cannot completely control. Catch those thoughts, think about them and how they affect you, and change them to more helpful thoughts.
4. **PLAN AHEAD** – Set a budget for yourself and plan holiday activities and gift giving ... in advance.
5. **DON'T TAKE ON TOO MUCH** – Consider limiting your activities to those you are interested in and able to do. It is okay to say no!
6. **TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF** – Attend to your own feelings and healthy self-care: good nutrition, sleep, and exercise are important to well-being.
7. **STAY CONNECTED** – Maintain good connections to family and friends. Talking with others can do a world of good.
8. **BE IN THE “NOW”** – Too much focus on worrying about what may or may not come and you will not be able to enjoy the present. Take in all that is your present moment and enjoy the present.
9. **TAKE A DEEP BREATH** – Practicing breathing or other relaxation techniques - e.g., progressive muscle relaxation, guided imagery exercises, tai chi, yoga.
10. **BEHAVIOURAL ACTIVATION** – Engage in an activity you may enjoy, such as, taking a walk, listening to music, reading a book.



How to get ready for Christmas will help make sure that the little things don't turn into big things. Knowing how to get ready for Christmas and most importantly, taking steps to insure you ARE ready will make your holiday season go smoother, look brighter and be merrier for everyone!

CHRISTMAS TREES: There is nothing more exciting than going to pick out a tree, or bring down the Christmas tree from the loft. Gathering around with people you love to add all the lights and ornaments. It brightens up anyone's day.

LIGHTS: Take time in the evenings to walk around the streets and see all the pretty lights. Neighbours gardens and houses just glisten more during this season.

ORNAMENTS: The holiday decorations are everywhere, the shops and stalls are full of Christmas knick-knacks that adds to the cheer no matter where you are.

PRESENTS: The holidays shouldn't be about the presents, but we all secretly love getting them. How can anyone not look forward to unwrapping a gift and being surprised? Don't forget about your pets.

TREATS: This is one of the few seasons where the variety of treats are abundant, and there are no limits to how many candy canes, chocolate strawberries, pavlova's and many more treats to share.

MISTLETOE: Is there any better excuse to bump into that special someone under some mistletoe?

CAROLS AND MUSIC: Attend carols by candlelight or put that Christmas CD on and sing along to the favourite Christmas carols.

SANTA: Brought wonder and joy to us as children, and still is a secret favourite for adults.

FOCUS ON THE POSITIVE

Others may not be as eager to share the Christmas spirit as you would like them to be. Don't let them get you down. Instead of feeling stressed out about all the things you have to do, try and focus on the positive things. Remember Christmas is about helping others, celebrating the season and feeling joyful. One of the favorite tips for how to get ready for Christmas is to learn to laugh it off. If something goes wrong or doesn't turn out like you expected, just smile and shrug it off. Getting upset won't change it anyway!

NEVER SPEND MORE THAN YOU HAVE

Remember that homemade gifts like cookies are just as well appreciated! Resist over committing yourself financially. Shop early and before you head to the shops make a list to avoid overspending. Discuss your festive plans as a family, and give thought to how your year may have changed and think of doing things collectively.

REMEMBER THE REASON FOR THE SEASON

Take a minute to stop, remember *WHY* we celebrate Christmas, and enjoy the small things that come with it, like family, friends, food and pretty decorations. It's time to really and truly enjoy Christmas.

HOW TO ACHIEVE A BETTER

nights sleep.

- If you need to nap, try and keep your nap to 30 minutes.
- Try and go to bed at the same time each night and wake up at the same time each morning, even on the weekends.
- Power down electronics at least 30 minutes before bedtime. Put all electronic devices in another room.
- Lower the lights several hours before bedtime to signal your body to get ready to go to sleep.
- Limit your alcohol and caffeine as you may find this reduces the quality of sleep.
- Keep your bedroom as a relaxing space.
- Exercise can improve sleep quality, exercise at least 3 to 4 hours prior to your bedtime.
- Avoid those midnight snacks before bedtime.
- Create a pre sleep pattern, find ways to clear and calm your mind before going to bed. This might be puzzles, reading, music, meditating or taking a warm shower.
- Have a notebook nearby to write the things that may be worrying you then close the notebook and say good-night to your worries. Put them to one side until the morning.
- Keep a sleep journal to help you keep track of activities, temperature, food etc and this may help you see patterns which may highlight what contributes to providing a better nights sleep.
- Avoid turning bright lights on when you need to use the bathroom.
- Lavender scented pillows or aromatherapy scents may help you relax.
- Take deep breaths, inhale for 5 seconds, hold for 3 seconds and then exhale for 5 seconds – repeating 15 times and this will contribute to relaxing and clearing your mind.

LOOKING AFTER YOUR WELLBEING

It is not uncommon to feel anxious at this time of year, please remember that our expert professionals are here to help provide support and advice.

Warm and sincere wishes from the EAP Team to you and your family for health and happiness throughout the holiday season.

RECIPE FOR CHRISTMAS

A pinch of imagination and magic,

A dessert spoon to reflect on the year that was,

A bucket of gratitude,

A very large container to give to all those less fortunate people,

Infinity amount of love, peace and kindness to sprinkle all over the world.