



BalanceWorks® Newsletter



November 2013 | Written by the work/life experts at eni



Helpful Holiday Tips

With the holiday season fast approaching, there is a great deal to plan and prepare for. The holiday season can bring a great deal of joy. However, between cooking, shopping, cleaning, traditions, parties and traveling, it can also become a bit overwhelming.

Use the following tips to help you get organized and reduce some of the stress that can accompany the holidays.

Gift Giving

It's helpful to start by making a list of everyone you have to buy gifts for. Then set a budget and brainstorm gifts for everyone on your list that will fit into your budget. Now it's time to research. Before purchasing gifts, browse catalogues and the Internet to be sure you're getting the best deal. To save time while shopping, make lists of what you would like to buy at each store. Set a day aside to shop for smaller gifts like stocking stuffers or grab bag gifts. You can also use this day to shop around for inspiration for gifts if you are unsure what to buy for a few people on your list.

If you find that you have way to many people to buy for, there are strategies to shrink your list without offending anyone. If you have a large extended family and are expected to buy presents for everyone, suggest implementing a

Secret Santa. Each person simply pulls a name from the hat and buys a gift for only that person. If you have a large group of friends and all buy gifts for each other, plan an event together instead. A fancy dinner, a night out on the town, a weekend trip, or a professional sporting event is a great way to spend time together and is often more cost effective than buying a separate gift for each of your friends. Regardless of the size of your list, it always helps to start shopping early, so you never drop an excessive amount of money at one time.

Hosting

Hosting a holiday gathering can be quite an undertaking. Just like with buying gifts it helps to make a list of exactly what you need to buy for your party – food, beverages, decorations, serving dishes, etc. Thoroughly clean your house a few days prior to the festivities, so you are not worried about cleaning while prepping for the party. Some food can be cooked or assembled the day prior to an event. For example, pies and other deserts can be baked and then refrigerated, potatoes can be peeled, and casseroles can be assembled and then reheated. Prepping food in advance can save a great deal of time the day of your event.

The costs for hosting a holiday gathering can really add up, but there are ways to

For more information or support on holiday tips, contact the work/life experts at **BalanceWorks®** by calling:

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reduce how much you spend. It is perfectly appropriate to ask guests to bring a dish. If you are hosting a fun holiday mixer ask each guest to bring either an appetizer or desert and you can provide the drinks. If you are hosting Thanksgiving dinner, volunteer to cook the turkey, but ask guests to bring the side dishes. Also, don't feel pressured to spend money on fancy decorations. Remember people attend your event for the company, not the décor!

Traveling

Traveling during the holiday season can be extremely hectic and very expensive. The day before Thanksgiving, several days surrounding Christmas, and New Year's Eve are all busy travel days. This means that roads and airports may be busier than usual and that many airlines hike up prices around these times. If you have a road trip planned during the holidays, it's a good idea to map out several different routes in case traffic is heavy. Also, be prepared for inclement weather. Pack your car with essentials like blankets, batteries, flashlights, water, non perishable food, etc. in case you get stuck.

If you are traveling by air, it may take longer at ticket counters and security checkpoints, so arrive earlier than you normally would. You can skip ticket counters altogether if you print out your boarding pass from home and only bring a carry on. The TSA suggests shipping wrapped presents or waiting until you arrive at your destination to wrap them as they may have to unwrap presents to inspect them for security purposes. It is also a good idea to travel early in the day as flight statistics show that planes traveling earlier in the day have a better on-time performance. And if your flight is cancelled, you will have the option of taking a flight later in the day.

Time Management

There is always a lot going on throughout the holiday season. If you have a long list of social engagements you have been invited to, decide which gatherings are most important to you and attend only those. Graciously inform the hosts of the parties you will not be able to attend as early as possible. Also, don't become overwhelmed by your to do list. If you are hosting Thanksgiving dinner, ask your sister to host the families New Year's Eve party. Avoid taking on additional projects during the holiday season. Finally, leave time to de-stress. We sometimes forget to take care of ourselves when we have so many obligations. Be sure to get plenty of sleep and continue practicing healthy habits. If you become overwhelmed, take a walk, get a massage, meditate, take a yoga class, or hit the gym, anything that reduces stress for you will do the trick.

Remember that your Personal Assistant is available throughout the holiday season to assist with travel planning, holiday recipe ideas, party planning tips and much more. Also, look for our annual holiday gift guide which will be coming out later this month.

We hope these tips will help to alleviate any holiday stress and your season will be filled with happiness, laughter and love.

Wishing you a very happy holiday season from all of us here at **eni**!

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