

8 TIPS TO A STRESS FREE HOLIDAY SEASON

by Diane Lang - Positive Living Expert and psychotherapist

We experience a combination of stressors related to financial costs of the holidays, family coming to stay and the conflicts it may bring, and the stress of trying to have the perfect meal and holiday all together. If you're one of those people who feel the pressure of the holidays, here are eight tips to help feel balanced, happy and stress-free.



Remember what the holidays are really about.

Spending quality time with family, friends and loved ones. It's about giving love and joy to others. Watch your expectation. Make sure they are realistic. We try for perfection during the holidays and we tend to forget what the holidays are really about. Remind yourself that the holidays are about being close to your loved ones while everything else comes second.

Take care of you. During the busy holiday season, we forget about ourselves.

We worry so much about setting a nice table, buying and cooking the food, decorating the house, buying the presents, and more that we forget to take a time out and spend some quiet time alone. Yes, it's the season of giving to others, but make sure to put yourself high up on your priority list. If we aren't feeling mentally, physically and emotionally healthy, how we will be able to have a good holiday? The more time you put aside for you, the healthier and happier you will feel this holiday season.

““

Kindness is like snow.
It beautifies
everything it covers.

- Kahlil Gibran

””

A Classic Holiday Book Recommendation

A Christmas Carol

by
Charles Dickens

In this classic novel by Charles Dickens, cold-hearted businessman Ebenezer Scrooge is visited by three spirits on Christmas Eve to remind him what the holiday is all about. If the story sounds familiar, maybe you've seen one of the several all-time best Christmas movies based on the story.

Seasonal disorder.

If you know that the cold weather and shorter days affect you and cause negative moods, then do some preventive work. Talk to your doctor about options, seek counsel before the change of weather and holidays start, and set up a support system to help when you're feeling down.

Start early.

Before the holiday season is in full swing, start making your to-do lists. Start your holiday shopping early, so when the holidays approach you're not scrambling for presents. Wrap your gifts as you buy them. Be proactive. Having a lot done ahead of time is a huge stress relief and then you will enjoy going out for any last minute things knowing that the bulk of it is complete.

Be upfront financially.

Tell family and friends what you can and can't do early on. If you know this will be a tough financial holiday season, then recommend other options such as buying for the kids only, a grab bag, the charity option (everyone gives to a charity - whatever they can afford) instead of a gift, play a fun game like Yankee Swap where everyone buys one gift (set a value for it), or learn from our children - homemade gifts!

Gratitude.

This is the time of year that we should spend more time counting our blessings, remembering what we have instead of worrying about what we don't. Instead of "Keeping up with the Joneses," take a minute to appreciate the abundance of love, health, family, and friends. Teach your kids about abundance. They should know that the most important things in life are the things that make us the happiest: good relationships with family and friends, a partner we can share our life with and a full schedule of social activities that involve lots of smiling and laughing.

Watch the signs.

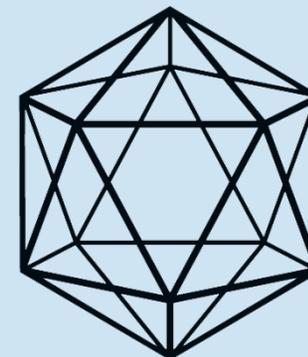
Listen to your body. If you are noticing any of the following signs then it's time to make changes: change in sleeping habits; change in eating habits; feeling irritable, moody and unhappy; exhaustion; and fatigue. These symptoms are all warning signs of too much stress and anxiety in our life. These are signs to slow down and take a time out.

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