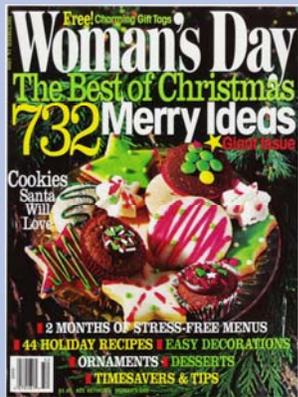


Taking the Stress Out of the Holidays (and finding the joy)



And who has time for all of this?



It's important to manage stress before things get out of control!



Identify Sources of Holiday Stress

- More obligations – added to an already busy schedule
- Media and marketing blitz – that starts too early
- Family situations – too much togetherness
- Unrealistic expectations – internal and external
- Loneliness – those without family or friends nearby
- Dark and cold outside – seasonal affective disorder
- Seasonal illnesses
- Blowing diet, exercise and budget
- Fatigue and burnout



"Not everything that counts can be counted; and not everything that can be counted counts."

Albert Einstein



Clarify your values
What are some changes
you can make this season?



Respect the Beliefs and Traditions of Others

Examples of holidays that may fall within
November or December - with varying dates.

For 2013:

- Al Hijra (Islamic, Muslim) Nov 5 – Dec 3
- Thanksgiving (American) Last Thurs of Nov
- Varyin Ashura (Islamic, Muslim) Nov 14
- Hanukkah (Jewish) Nov 27-Dec 5
- Yule/Winter Dec 21



Respect the Beliefs and Traditions of Others

December Holidays

- Dec 8 Bodhi Day (Buddhist)
- Dec 8 St Nicholas Day (International)
- Dec 16-24 Los Posadas (Mexican)
- Dec 24 & 25 – Christmas Eve and Christmas (Christian)
- Dec 26 – Jan 1 Kwanzaa (African-American)
- Jan 1 New Years Day (International)
- Jan 1 Japanese New Year



Respect the Beliefs and Traditions of Others

- Look for commonalities and points of interest between holidays rather than focusing on the differences.
- Embrace the diverse celebrations.
- Avoid being judgmental.
- Avoid labeling traditions as 'different' from your own.
- Find common ground: Be courteous, kind, gracious and empathetic – all religions believe in these values.
- Don't assume that others are not comfortable with joining your celebration.



Kindness is universal!
*A kind word or deed can
make a big difference for many.*

Typical holiday family dinner?



Take Care of Your Physical Health

Get regular physical Activity

- If you already exercise regularly:
 - Maintain a at least a modified exercise program.
- If you do not exercise regularly:
 - Enjoy opportunities for activity like making snow people, snow ball fights or cross country skiing.
 - Park further away from errands and walk the extra distance.
 - Try to fit in smaller bits of activity throughout your day.



Have you ever felt this way?



How to eat, drink and be merry (without regret)

On the day of an event:

- Make healthier food choices during the day.
- Keep portions lighter during the day.
- To prevent extreme hunger, have a healthy snack before the event.



How to eat, drink and be merry (without regret)

During the event:

- Don't overindulge - eat reasonable portion sizes.
- After you eat, get rid of the plate.
- Use moderation with beverages.
- Focus on the other activities at the event.
- If planning the event, include healthy options.



Take Care of Your Emotional Health

Reduce External Sources of Stress

- Start early.
- Take it easy on yourself:
 - Make a "to do" list
 - Prioritize and get rid of unrealistic or unnecessary tasks
 - Streamline
 - Simplify
 - Delegate
 - Take breaks
 - Recharge – take a few minutes for yourself
- Plan your budget.
- Think out of the box for gift giving.



Take Care of Your Emotional Health

Reduce External Sources of Stress

- Learn to say **NO!**
- Let go of traditions that don't work.
- Let someone else host the celebration or dinner this year.



*Remember you can
always put off social events and
entertaining until after the new year.*

Manage Internal Sources of Stress

Mind-Body Connection

- Every thought, feeling and belief affects every cell in our body and our immune function.
- Our mind is our inner world.
- Our body reacts to what mind perceives.



Manage Internal Sources of Stress

- Set realistic expectations.
- Let go of things outside your control.
 - Remember you are not responsible for other's happiness, behaviors or attitudes.
- Keep it in perspective.
- Be flexible.
- Keep your sense humor.
- Focus on gratitude.



Get Rid of Stress Producing Beliefs

- *"I have to cover my house with lights from roof-line to every last shrub."*



- *"I need to buy the perfect gift for everyone. It is going to be so expensive!"*

Get Rid of Stress Producing Beliefs

- *"The house has to be sparkling clean and beautifully decorated."*

- *"It's my party so its my job to make sure everyone gets along and has a good time."*



Focus on the Positives of the Season

- Remember how you felt about the holidays when you were a kid?

- *"I love to shop and look at the decorations in the stores!"*
- *"I love making treats, shopping and wrapping my presents."*
- *"I can't wait for the holidays!"*

- What is your perspective on each of these now?

- Can you change your attitudes?



Resignation

I _____ am hereby officially tendering my resignation as an adult during the holidays. I have decided to accept the perspective and responsibilities of a six-year-old:

My job description is as follows:

Incorporating snow angels and snowball fights into my fitness routine



Helping my family make special food and goodies (and eating the dough)



Believing in peace on earth.

Making decorations out of Styrofoam, sparkles, pop cycle sticks and glue.



Lying awake at night feeling excited about sharing and celebrating.

So... here's my car keys, smartphone, iPad, laptop, credit cards, and cynical attitude.



Remember, you can't text, tweet, Facebook, email, fax or voice mail me

So if you want to talk to me – no need to make an appointment – you just gotta catch me and.....

Tag – you're it!
