

Have a happy, healthy holiday season



Holidays can be the most wonderful time of the year or a time of teeth-clenching, whirlwind activities that add up to stress-induced meltdown.

This year, try a new approach to the holidays. Take preventive measures to manage your stress, eat healthier foods and sneak some physical activity into your schedule.

How can you put the “happy” back in your holidays?

Above all else, take it easy on yourself. You don’t have to be perfect—you’re human after all.

As you approach the holidays, it’s important to recognize these signs of holiday-related stress:

- Irritability and moodiness
- Trouble sleeping on a regular basis
- Weight loss or weight gain
- A high level of tension—with muscle aches or headaches
- Feelings of being overwhelmed or even panic

Look for holiday stress-busting tips on the following page.



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Beat stress and ring in the cheer



Holiday eating the healthy way

- Do your best to follow a balanced eating plan throughout the holidays.
- Enjoy a favorite holiday dessert at lunch, and then balance that meal with a low-fat dinner.
- If you have a high-fat or high-sugar day of eating, strive for low-fat and low-sugar the next day.
- Ask yourself if you are overeating because of anxiety and loneliness. If so, acknowledge your reasons for unhealthy eating, and then determine that they don't fit your healthy lifestyle. Substitute a calming activity or a visit with a friend instead of eating.

Give yourself the gift of exercise

- Take a walk in the morning before facing work and family demands.
- Even better, ask a neighbor or friend to walk with you to keep you motivated.
- Suggest an ice skating outing or indoor volleyball game at a recreation center as part of a get-together for work or family.
- Add variety and convenience to your workout routine with a new home exercise DVD.

Happy holidays to you

- Change one behavior at a time—start small and focus on that one behavior before trying to change another.
- Pay attention to your own needs and feelings. Engage in holiday activities that you enjoy and find relaxing.
- Recognize how you deal with stress and determine if you are relying on unhealthy behaviors, such as smoking, eating or drinking alcohol, to manage stress.
- Use the holidays as a time to strengthen your support network by reconnecting with friends and family. Don't be afraid to ask for a shoulder to lean on.

