

Healthy Workplace

Your monthly Anthem wellness newsletter



This December put your Emotional Health First!

The holiday season can take its toll on your emotional health, and it's no surprise. The holidays can put many demands on you – parties, shopping and entertaining to name a few.

You can reduce the stress that comes along with the season with just a few simple changes.

1. **Accept your feelings.** It's OK to take time for yourself to express your feelings. Don't try to force yourself to be happy just because it's the holidays.
2. **Reach out.** If you're feeling lonely, try to involve yourself in community or social events.
3. **Be realistic.** The holidays don't have to be perfect.
4. **Don't abandon healthy habits.** Over indulgence only adds stress and guilt.
5. **Take a breather.** Make time for yourself. Find something that reduces stress by clearing your mind, slowing your breathing, and restoring inner calm.



Helpful Hint: No matter who you are, stress is most likely a part of your life. The key is learning how to identify it and manage it. Try taking 5-10 minutes out of your day to sit comfortably, close your eyes, and slowly take deep breathes in and out while you imagine yourself in relaxing place that brings you peace.

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If you're feeling stressed, worried or having a tough time, you may need someone to speak with. Now, you can see a licensed therapist using LiveHealth Online Psychology. Talk with a therapist from your home or wherever you have Internet access.



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- Grief
- Panic attacks
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By using LiveHealth Online, you can:

- See a board-certified doctor in a few minutes with no appointment
- Make an appointment with a licensed therapist in four days or **less!**



7 Ways to Reduce Family Stress during the Holidays

By Tamara Lechner

Are your holidays full of relaxation and quality time with family? If not, you're not alone. In fact, 90 percent of Americans who completed a survey

(<http://www.consumerreports.org/cro/news/2011/11/americans-topholiday-dreads-mdash-being-nice-makes-the-list/index.htm>) indicated that they feel stress during the holidays and 24 percent experience difficulty with family members. If you're looking for ways to reduce holiday stress and create warm memories with your family, follow these seven recommendations.



- 1. Focus on the Positive.** What do you remember from the holidays last year? Your uncle's incessant jokes? Your family asleep in front of the television? Don't dwell on negative memories from previous holidays. Instead, focus on experiences you enjoy. The fabulous meals. Reconnecting with family. Not having to cook. Consistently maintain a positive mindset; **your thoughts can become your reality.**
- 2. Let Go of the Past.** Pretend you are a newcomer to your own family. Approach them with curiosity and excitement. Forget past transgressions, arguments, and tears. You are not condoning past wrongs by letting them go; you are just saying they cannot hurt you anymore.
- 3. Maintain Your Routine.** As much as possible, maintain your typical sleeping, eating, and exercise schedules. Your vitality can be weakened by changes in routine, which can lead to feelings of anxiety or irritation. Making time for yourself can help you stay peaceful and grounded, regardless of what your family members do or say.
- 4. Hold Realistic Expectations.** If you become frustrated that the holidays aren't going according to plan, remember that there is no such thing as a perfect family or perfect holiday, regardless of what you see on television or social media. Your family is in your life for a reason. What can you learn from them? See every interaction as a growth opportunity—even during the most frustrating, dysfunctional moments.
- 5. Stay in the Present.** What is the best gift you could give to yourself and others at your holiday gathering? Being present. Set your intention to focus on the moment, and catch yourself if you begin to think about past holiday problems. Your family will not be on this earth forever. Cultivate appreciation for their presence in your life at the moment.
- 6. Make Clear Requests.** Your family often won't know what's important to you unless you voice it. If you would like to say grace before a meal, then simply ask, "Would you mind if I ask for a blessing before we eat?" Clearly stating your needs can help to reduce holiday stress and develop closer family ties. Encourage your family members to do the same, whether it be creating clear boundaries around topics that are discussed, alcohol consumption, or the duration of the family gathering.
- 7. Start Family Holiday Traditions.** Creating family traditions can help make holidays more fun. Make your own, or try these three ideas: Share gratitude. Each year, organize a time when your family sits down to share what they love about the holidays, or about individual members of the family. Photograph happy moments. Take photos during good family times, and revisit them to remember how great the holidays can actually be. Plan the holidays together. Work as a team to create a vision for the upcoming holidays; encourage each family member to participate in a fun way. Clearly dividing the work can help everyone feel like they're contributing and can diminish conflict.





Surviving the Holidays

It is that time of year again when we look forward to gathering with family and friends to rejoice in the spirit of the holidays. The joys of the season are also filled with lots of wonderful food, seasonal goodies, and merriment that can result in a few extra pounds that wrap around your middle.

Dangerous pounds! Research shows that most adults gain a few pounds over the holidays, lose one or two of those added pounds, but usually hold onto at least one pound each year. This slow and steady weight creep finds most adults overweight by middle age!

Fear not, you can take pleasure in the holidays and indulge in the delicious foods. The holidays are not a time of deprivation; no one wants to face Thanksgiving, Christmas, or any holiday party without being able to enjoy his or her favorite foods. With a little anticipation and a plan in hand, this year you can avoid being a victim of the annual holiday trap.

A holiday strategy includes tightening up on your eating plan *now*, along with increasing daily exercise a few weeks before the holidays arrive. This way, you can splurge a little during the festivities while keeping weight within normal range by year's end.

Make Your Plan

Try some of these slimming tips and ideas:



- Keep up your regular physical activity and make sure to get in a good workout on the day of the party or event. NO excuses!
- Be super-diligent on non-party days by sticking closely to your eating plan.
- Eat a small, nutritious snack before leaving for the party. This helps to take the edge off of your



appetite and gives you willpower to resist hors d'oeuvres, saving your calories for the meal.

- Offer to bring a healthy dish, one you know you can enjoy without lots of extra calories.
- Buy yourself a fabulous holiday outfit that makes you look great and celebrates your recent weight loss. Basic solid colors with clean lines are the most flattering.
- Ladies, carry a clutch handbag that will keep one hand occupied, reducing the urge to nibble.
- Ladies and gents, wear a comfortable yet tight outfit that will not allow you to overindulge.
- Watch your alcohol calories -- they add up fast. Alternate alcoholic beverages with non-calorie beverages such as sparkling water.
- Look over all the food offerings before you decide what you are going to eat. If there are foods that you love but know are decadently rich, just sample a tasting portion.
- Use a smaller plate (the dessert plate is good). This tip can help you reduce the total amount you eat as long as you don't go back for seconds.
- Eat slowly and savor every bite.
- Don't linger around the food table! Move to another location that is less tempting.
- Always sit down while you eat and moderation are the keys to success.

This year, start a tradition on the morning of each holiday. Get the whole clan up early for a bike ride or walk in the woods before you sit down to that scrumptious meal and day of football games. And remember, social gatherings during the holidays are a time to embrace and give thanks for our family and friends. Spend less time focused on food and more time enjoying the camaraderie of your loved ones. And if you decide to totally disregard your eating plan, well, that's fine for a special occasion! Just brush yourself off the next morning and get right back into your exercise and healthy eating routine.

Remember: Holiday time does not need to be synonymous with weight gain. Make this your year *not* to gain those few extra pounds that you adamantly proclaim to lose on New Year's Day.

WebMD Weight Loss Clinic - Expert Column Reviewed by [Kathleen M. Zelman, MPH, RD, LD](#).



Winter Slaw with Red Pears and Pumpkin Seeds



Servings: 8

Ingredients

- ¼ cup fresh blood orange or regular orange juice
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 2 tablespoons sherry vinegar
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- Kosher salt, freshly ground pepper
- 2 cups Brussels sprouts
- 2 firm but ripe red-skinned pears, cut into quarters, cored, thinly sliced
- 1 bunch small beets, trimmed, peeled, thinly shaved on a mandolin
- 4 cups mixed radicchio leaves, torn if large
- ¼ cup unsalted, roasted pumpkin seeds (pepitas)

Preparation

1. Whisk orange juice, oil, vinegar, and mustard in a small bowl to combine. Season dressing with salt and pepper.
2. Trim Brussels sprouts and halve lengthwise. Remove larger leaves; place in a large bowl. Very thinly slice remaining cores; place in bowl with leaves. Add half of dressing and toss to coat; season with salt and pepper. Massage Brussels sprouts gently to soften slightly. Add pears, beets, radicchio, and remaining dressing and toss well.

Notes: Trimming a generous amount of the stem from the Brussels sprouts makes it quite a bit easier to tease apart the leaves for this winter slaw recipe.

And Try this.....

Healthy 3 Ingredient Flourless Brownies



Ingredients

- 3 medium, overripe bananas (approximately 1 cup or so)
- 1/2 cup smooth almond butter (can sub for any smooth nut butter)
- 2 T - 1/4 cup cocoa powder (more = richer taste)

Preparation

1. Preheat the oven the 350 degrees, grease a small cake pan or loaf pan and set aside.
2. In a small microwave-safe bowl or stovetop, melt your nut butter. In a large mixing bowl, add the banana, nut butter and cocoa powder and mix very well.
3. Pour the mixture into the greased pan and bake for around 20 minutes or until cooked through. Remove from the oven and allow to cool completely before slicing into pieces.

Notes: For a smoother batter, add all the ingredients into a blender and blend well. For the best texture, enjoy refrigerated.

Recipe by @ <https://thebigmansworld.com/>

