

# TIPS FOR MANAGING STRESS DURING THE HOLIDAYS

DECEMBER 2019 RESOURCE SHARING

For many people the holiday season brings happiness and joy. It can also bring other emotions such as stress and depression. It is important to acknowledge that the holidays can be difficult for some people and that we can all experience a variety of emotions during this time. By recognizing “triggers” or causes of these emotions and using some practical tips, you can minimize the stress and better manage these other emotions that may also accompany the holidays.

- 1. Acknowledge your feelings.** If someone close to you has recently died or you can't be with loved ones, realize that it's normal to feel sadness and grief.
- 2. Reach out.** If you feel lonely or isolated, seek out community activities or events where you will be with others. They can offer support and companionship.
- 3. Be realistic.** The holidays don't have to be perfect or just like last year. As families change and grow, traditions and rituals often change as well.
- 4. Set aside differences.** Try to accept family members and friends as they are, even if they you have differences.
- 5. Stick to a budget.** Before you go gift and food shopping, decide how much money you can afford to spend. Then stick to your budget.
- 6. Plan ahead.** Set aside specific days for shopping, baking, visiting friends and other activities.
- 7. Learn to say no.** Try not to overextend yourself. Saying yes when you should say no can leave you feeling resentful and overwhelmed.
- 8. Don't abandon healthy habits.** Don't let the holidays become a free-for-all. Overindulgence only adds to your stress and guilt. Get plenty of sleep and include regular physical activity as part of your day.
- 9. Take a breather.** Make some time for yourself. Spending just 15 minutes alone, without distractions, may refresh you enough to handle everything you need to do. Try taking a walk or listening to music.
- 10. Seek professional help if you need it.** Despite your best efforts, you may find yourself feeling persistently sad or anxious, bothered by physical complaints, unable to sleep, irritable and hopeless, or unable to face routine chores. If these feelings last a while, talk to your doctor or a mental health professional.

Excerpted from <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/stress/art-20047544>