

De-Stressing for the Holidays: A Wellness Approach

A simplified holiday can be joyful and rewarding. Take inventory and consider these ideas:

- Call a family meeting, preferably early, soon after Thanksgiving. Decide what is most important to you to achieve and create an umbrella of values. Use this as your guide, and daily decisions will be easier to make.
- Set a holiday budget and reconsider the love-equals-money myth. Decide how much you will spend on the entire holiday (including gifts, decorations and food). How can you express your love with out spending a fortune?
- Keep it simple. Lower your expectations of having the perfect holiday. Less is best. Do what is meaningful to you and for those you care about.
- Create easy rituals. Consider letting go of rituals that no longer work or have lost their meaning.
- Add richness to the holiday. Consider volunteering or helping others.
- Give the gift or reflection. Use your words to tell others how you feel about them and what you have come to appreciate about them.
- Learn from traditions of other faiths and cultures. Replace frenzied shopping with customs and traditions connected to your family or friend's heritage.
- Celebrate the Winter Solstice on December 21. A time of rejuvenation for the natural world, emphasize nature and not commercialism. Go for a walk. Enjoy the sun and fresh air.
- Inspire your children. Play with your children. Consider story reading, singing, baking, stringing popcorn and outdoor activities as ways to be together. Routine is essential. Keep bedtimes regular. Schedule “hang out” time as a family.
- Spread out holiday commitments. Give yourself permission to say no and make choices.
- Be good to your body. Get enough sleep, drink plenty of water and plan for quiet reflective time.
- Consider going away for the holidays. Take that much needed and deserved vacation. Remember: you can have a family celebration any day of the year!