

# Stress During the Holidays



**It's that time of year again. But it doesn't have to be full of stress.**

The holiday season is a joyful and magical time, but for many, it can also be a source of stress and anxiety. With expectations of family gatherings, shopping, and the pressure to meet various commitments, maintaining mental wellbeing can be challenging. Here are some strategies to help you take care of your mental health during this busy time.

## **Set Realistic Expectations**

It's easy to get caught up in the idea of a "perfect" holiday, but perfection isn't realistic. Instead of trying to do everything or please everyone, focus on what matters most to you. Set achievable goals and give yourself permission to say no to extra obligations that could overwhelm you.

## **Stick to Healthy Habits**

With the rush of holiday events, it can be tempting to skip exercise, overindulge in junk food, or sacrifice sleep. However, maintaining healthy habits like regular physical activity, nutrient-dense eating, and getting enough rest can significantly reduce stress and keep your mood stable.

## **Make Time for Self-Care**

Amid holiday preparations, don't forget to schedule time for yourself. Whether it's taking a walk, reading a book, meditating, or just relaxing, these small moments of self-care can recharge your mental energy and improve your resilience to stress. You need to have an outlet to release the stress.

## **Manage Financial Pressure**

Holiday spending can quickly become a source of anxiety. Create a budget that works for you and stick to it. Remember that meaningful gifts don't have to be expensive, and often, experiences or personal gestures mean more than material items.

## **Limit Social Media Consumption**

During the holidays, social media can amplify feelings of inadequacy, especially when comparing your celebrations to others'. Limit your time on social media and remember that what you see online is often a highlight reel, not the whole story. (It's a double whammy when Facebook or Twitter is advertising hundreds of discounted products that you "need to buy" for the holidays.)

## **Reach out for support**

Don't hesitate to reach out to loved ones for support. Whether that's a friend, family member or a mental health professional. Find someone who can support you if you're feeling stressed out.