

Manage Stress and Maintain Your Weight

Healthy Holidays

Manage Stress and Maintain Your Weight

Holidays often come with twin dangers — the increased stress of a busy schedule with time and money commitments, as well as weight gain that stems from all the salty sides and sugary desserts. This month, we'll focus on maintaining your Zen — and if you wish, you're welcome to track your weight as we go.

How to Reduce Your Stress

Unchecked stress often leads to depression and poor choices. Think about how you can utilize these tips to defeat your stress as it bubbles up, before it gets out of control.

- 1. Admit how you feel.** If you're going through something (a recent loss or a different personal issue), it's okay to avoid holiday festivities. Take care of yourself first. If you do go, acknowledge how you feel and make sure you remain in a good place.
- 2. Talk to friends—or a professional.** If you feel lonely or isolated, find support and companionship with your friends or family. If everyone is busy, volunteering your time to those in need is a perfect opportunity to stay busy and feel better about yourself at the same time. If you truly can't shake the holiday blues, there's nothing wrong with that. Just make sure you see a professional before you begin to spiral and make unhealthy choices.
- 3. Forget about "perfect."** Go with the flow and have fun! Also, remember that traditions change as time goes on. Try to modify your favorite traditions instead of holding on to everything as your circle of family and friends continues to grow and evolve.
- 4. Forgive.** Understand that everyone else is fighting their own battle as well. Try to put grievances on the back burner, accept family and friends for who they are, and do what you can to let things go when you're feeling angry. It could just be the stress creeping in!
- 5. Stick to a budget.** This is a big one that many people forget. Don't let your bank account sit in the back of your mind all holiday long! Instead, make a budget, stick to it and spread happiness with your presence, not your presents.
- 6. Plan ahead.** A schedule is a great way to maintain control of your day and your mood, but only if it's realistic. Plan to avoid last-minute scrambles, but don't cram so much in you scramble anyway.
- 7. When you need to, politely say no.** People usually understand if something isn't possible. Find a polite way to decline requests and commitments that will push your stress into a danger zone.
- 8. Stick to your routine.** We all indulge a bit during the holidays, but try and stick as much as possible to your normal sleep schedule, exercise routine and diet.
- 9. Take sanity breaks.** You deserve them. Even a small 10-15-minute break by yourself can help you channel your calm the rest of the day. If you can squeeze in more time, that's great!

Your Assignment – Stress Journal

Journaling helps you become more aware of your feelings, and it is a good emotional outlet. Keep the tips above in mind (or even better, on your person), and implement them when you feel stressed and it is appropriate for the situation. When you do, write down your thoughts: which tip you tried, why, if it helped diminish your stress and what you can do in a similar situation next time. If you're also focusing on your weight, track that each week as well. Monitoring your weight will help you make better choices and avoid stress-eating!

Week 1: Journal

Week 1 Weight: _____

Week 2: Journal

Week 2 Weight: _____

Week 3: Journal

Week 3 Weight: _____

Week 4: Journal

Week 4 Weight: _____

Employer Activity Tracking

Please complete the following information and submit it to your employer to receive credit for this activity:

Name:

Date:

Did you journal each week?

YES NO

Please list 1-3 stress management techniques you plan to continue using in the future:

Did you monitor your weight each week?

YES NO