

# Healthy Holidays

## Managing Stress During Holidays

### Healthy Holidays, Happy You

As great as it is, the holiday season is also a bit of an assault on your health. Busy schedules make it difficult to exercise or cook healthy meals; good-natured co-workers, friends and family offer more homemade snacks and treats; holiday parties overflow with savory sides, sugary desserts and alcohol; and the stress of family gatherings can sap the energy needed to leap over these obstacles.

This month's newsletter is all about making it through a busy holiday season with your health, your happiness and your waistline intact. First, let's address your first potential pitfall—the mood-ruining, diet-derailing, exercise-delaying effects of increased stress.

section **01**

#### Your December Activity:

### Manage Stress and Maintain Your Weight

Keep a host of useful tips in mind as you interact with friends and family. If you wish, track your weight each week and remain in control of your diet.



## Don't Let Seasonal Stress Get You Down

#### Keep your routine

Regular sleep, exercise and diet will help you feel in control and have a massive — and entirely positive — impact on your stress level.

#### Don't over-schedule

Overextending yourself doesn't do anyone any favors. Keep the peace and enjoy your time with friends and family by only agreeing to take on assignments you know you can handle.

#### Know your budget

Extra rounds of drinks and bursts of generosity add up in a hurry. Determine how much you're willing to spend in advance and stick to your decision!

#### Admit when you need support

There's never shame in feeling overwhelmed. Stress-related health issues such as depression are known to spike when our schedules are hectic and new stressors are introduced. If you need to take a break or get some help, do so! Your health and happiness is more important than a holiday triviality.



## Weight Management Tips

These simple weight management tips are good in every day practice, but it's an especially great idea to keep them in mind over the holidays.

1

### **Bring your own dish to social events.**

That way you know you'll have a healthy option!

2

### **Be mindful of portion size.**

You won't eat what's not on your plate.

3

### **Use smaller plates and glasses.**

Sometimes your eyes are bigger than your stomach. This helps!

4

### **Always include healthy choices on your plate.**

It makes sure you eat some nutrients and it reduces the real estate available for unhealthy treats.

5

### **Track what you eat.**

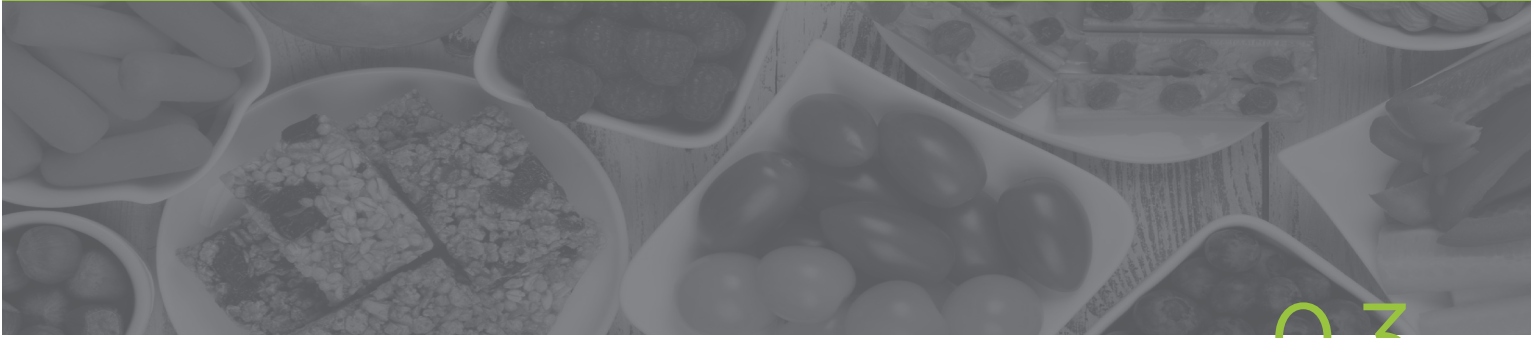
Know when you're getting out of control!

6

### **Plan ahead and continue to exercise.**

If you don't have time for your normal routine, break it up and complete it in small bursts throughout the day.





## Healthy Holiday Food Substitutions

Pumpkin pie with a tower of whipped cream. Buttery mashed potatoes. Fluffy homemade stuffing. We all have our own favorite comfort foods during the holiday season, and those temptations make it hard to stay in control of a diet. But you can do it—all it takes is a few mental tricks and the willpower to make some simple food substitutions.

### Limit Indulgences and Maintain Your Diet

- **Fill up on the good stuff first.** Eat your fruits, vegetables and lean meats first! Slow down to let the healthy food settle and you'll be less tempted to make a big calorie splurge on a sugary dessert.
- **Eat a healthy snack or small meal before you leave.** Don't "save up" for a big meal and don't expect your willpower to hold out forever, especially if you're hungry when you arrive. Get something in your stomach before you depart for a party or family gathering.
- **Control your environment.** Try to keep sweet and savory treats out of your line of sight, and socialize away from the snack or dessert tables. If it's convenient, it's also a great idea to sit next to someone who is also making healthy choices and support one another.

### Simple Food Substitutions

#### Eat This

**Fruits**

**Water or unsweetened ice tea**

**Whole grain breads**

**Low-fat or fat-free dairy products**

#### Not That

Pies and rich, sugary desserts

Sugary soda or juice

Breads made with white/enriched flour

Whole milk, fatty cheeses and ice cream

**Bonus Tip:** Every meal, ease up on the gravy and fill half your plate with healthy fruits and vegetables!

## December Recipe

### Quick and Healthy Stuffing

*Bring this tasty stuffing to ensure there's something healthy at each holiday gathering*

**Total Time (Cook and Prep):** 60 minutes  
**Servings:** 6

#### INGREDIENTS

6 pieces sourdough bread  
 6 pieces rye bread  
 ½ cup chopped onion  
 1 stalk celery  
 1 red bell pepper  
 3 cloves garlic  
 1 sprig fresh rosemary  
 1 ½ cup vegetable stock  
 3 tablespoons coconut oil  
 ½ teaspoon salt  
 ¼ teaspoon black pepper



#### Nutrition Information

325 calories  
 9 g fat  
 538 mg sodium  
 48 g carbohydrates  
 0 g fiber  
 11 g protein

#### INSTRUCTIONS

1. While your oven preheats to 350°F/177°C, prep your veggies and dice the onion, celery, garlic, red bell pepper and rosemary.
2. Next, chop the bread, roughly, into 1-inch pieces.
3. In a large bowl, add all of your ingredients to the bread cubes and thoroughly mix.
4. Transfer the mix into a baking dish, cover and bake for 30 minutes.
5. Remove the cover and cook for 15 more minutes (until the top is golden brown).

# 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

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Week 1 Weight: \_\_\_\_\_

**Week 2:** Journal

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Week 2 Weight: \_\_\_\_\_

**Week 3:** Journal

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Week 3 Weight: \_\_\_\_\_

**Week 4:** Journal

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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:

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Did you monitor your weight each week?

YES     NO

# Squash Seasonal Stress

## DECEMBER ACTIVITY

### Manage Stress and Maintain Your Weight

Keep a host of useful tips in mind as you interact with friends and family. If you wish, track your weight each week and remain in control of your diet. Your first tip? Keep your routine! Regular sleep, exercise and diet will help you feel in control and have a positive impact on your stress level.

### Set yourself up for success

- Keep close to your routines for sleep, exercise and diet
- Don't overschedule
- Know your budget
- Admit when you need support



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