

Holiday Stress 2013

The festive season is here! It is time to take the well-deserved break from a hectic routine, and what better way to ring in the New Year than spending time with your family and closest friends!

Too Much to Do?

However, as you scout around trying to have the perfect holiday, you quickly realize that there is just too much to do.

Regardless of your multi-tasking abilities, winding up things at work, trying to beat the shopping queues, attending festive parties while also trying to spend time with near and dear ones, can leave you feeling stressed and exhausted.

Holiday Stress Can Be Anticipated

Fortunately, unlike other stresses we face in our day-to-day lives, 'holiday stress' is something that can be foreseen and therefore tackled. Take these easy pre-emptive measures to ensure that the time-off leaves you with wonderful memories and a positive frame of mind that extends well beyond the holiday season.

Have a 'To-Do' List

Have a 'to-do' list for fun, togetherness and leisure: Sure, the holidays are about maximizing fun and making every second count. Nevertheless, trying to do too much is the number one cause of holiday stress.

This season make a list of things you must do, whether it is an evening out at the holiday light festival, baking your grandmother's pumpkin pie or meeting old friends. Involve your family, including the children, in planning fun-activities that you all can enjoy together. Pace out your

planned activities to give you enough time for leisure, which could involve a visit to the spa or just relaxing with a good book at home.

Delegate Responsibilities at Home

Between sprucing up the house, yard work, baking holiday goodies, buying gifts, sending festive greetings to friends and colleagues, and planning fun activities for the entire family—whew!—you inevitably find yourself being weighed down and racing against time.

You "Gotta Let Go!"

If you're a "don't-worry-about-it-I'll-take-care-of-it" sort of person, stop! You're helping train a family system that does not think proactively about chores! That means you pick up the slack making yourself exhausted!

Taking help from those who care about you can help alleviate stress. Instead of trying to cope with it all, delegate tasks to every member of the household based upon who has the best skills, most potential, or most desire for specific chores.

Make Connections "Important People"

Make an effort to connect with 'important' people in your life: Positive, nurturing relationships are an essential aspect of our overall feeling of well-being. The holidays offer the perfect occasion to reconnect with old friends and extended family members, reminiscing the past and getting up to speed on the happening's in each other's lives. Don't think, "I don't think Mary is interested in hearing from me at this point in her life." It is more likely the reverse!



Commit to Helping Someone

There is more happiness in giving than in receiving. In keeping with the spirit of giving during this holiday season volunteer at a local charity or make a conscious effort to assist someone in need. If you've brushed off this idea in the past, now's your chance. It will lift you up. If possible make it a family activity, with everyone contributing to the cause in some way.

A good deed will not only add to your "happiness quotient" but will help you develop a greater sense of gratitude for all that you do have.

Maintain a 'Happiness' Journal

This would be an ideal time to start a journal or a blog for capturing not only the holiday magic, but also the smaller moments of joy that are interspersed in your everyday life. This journal is exclusively about "what's going well". Strange as it sounds, documenting happy events can help you prepare, look for, and act to create more of them. Try it for 30 days at see if you don't benefit from this exercise.

Holidays are certainly about creating memories that last a life time. However ensuring that you feel truly rejuvenated would require some amount of forward thinking and a positive approach to beating the associated holiday stress.

For more information, call your Employee Assistance Program at (800) 563-8201 or (402) 434-2900.

