

DECEMBER



# HOLIDAY HEALTH

Stress and depression can ruin your holidays and hurt your health. Being realistic, planning ahead and seeking support can help ward off stress and depression.

Learn to recognize common holiday triggers, so you can disarm them before they lead to a meltdown:

- **Relationships.** Relationships can cause turmoil, conflict or stress at any time, but tensions are often heightened during the holidays. Family misunderstandings and conflicts can intensify — especially if you're thrust together for several days. On the other hand, facing the holidays without a loved one can be tough and leave you feeling lonely and sad.
- **Finances.** With the added expenses of gifts, travel, food and entertainment, the holidays can put a strain on your budget — and your peace of mind. Not to mention that overspending now can mean financial worries for months to come.
- **Physical demands.** Even die-hard holiday enthusiasts may find that the extra shopping and socializing can leave them wiped out. Being exhausted increases your stress, creating a vicious cycle. Exercise and sleep — good antidotes for stress and fatigue — may take a back seat to chores and errands. To top it off, burning the wick at both ends makes you more susceptible to colds and other unwelcome guests.

## Try to prevent stress and depression in the first place, especially if the holidays have taken an emotional toll on you in the past:

1. Acknowledge your feelings-It's OK to take time to cry or express your feelings.
2. Reach out-Seek out community, religious or other social events.
3. Be realistic-The holidays don't have to be perfect or just like last year.
4. Set aside differences-Try to accept family members and friends as they are, even if they don't live up to all your expectations.
5. Stick to a budget-decide how much money you can afford to spend.
6. Plan ahead -Set aside specific days for shopping, baking, visiting friends and other activities.
7. Learn to say no-Friends and colleagues will understand if you can't participate in every project or activity.
8. Don't abandon healthy habits-Overindulgence only adds to your stress and guilt.
9. Take a breather-Make some time for yourself.
10. Seek professional help if you need it

*To learn more about this and other health topics visit [simplywell.com](http://simplywell.com)*

Source: [Mayoclinic.com/health/stress/](http://Mayoclinic.com/health/stress/)

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