

Beating Holiday Stress



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Keep it simple.

Striving for holiday perfection might mean you are too busy to really enjoy the moments that make the holidays truly special. Try to simplify your life a little. You might not end up with the perfect table setting, but you will end up with a happy family – and feeling better yourself because you are spending time with the people you love.

Here's our favourite way to help make your home peaceful and inviting – de-clutter!

TIP Try using the “No more STUFF” method:

- S Start small.** Start with one drawer a day or week, little steps can lead to big gains over time.
- T Timer.** Give yourself a time limit, like 15 or 30 minutes, to tackle a job. You'll find that when your time is up you may just want to keep going.
- U Use the one in/one out method.** Whenever you bring something new into your home, get rid of one item. That way, you'll never run the risk of outgrowing your storage spaces.
- F Freeing up space.** For every item, ask “Do I love it?” or “Do I use it?” Answer no to those questions and you can mark the item for removal.
- F Find a home for everything.** Everything you keep should have a designated home or place – like a drawer or a cupboard. When something doesn't have a proper place, then it's clutter.

Life still too complicated? Get more tips that will help make your life easier at morethanmedication.ca/holiday

Life made Simple | Holiday Stress

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It's a family affair.

Holidays are all about spending time with loved ones. But in the busy lead-up to the festivities, families often neglect each other. Turn off that seasonal autopilot and spend some quality time with loved ones. Yes, you've got the holiday office party and all that shopping to finish, but try to schedule family activities that will help you all slow down and appreciate the joys of the season and each other. Exercise together or take time to sit down to a hearty family breakfast. Experts say family rituals lift holiday stress.

TIP Plan your own Winter Carnival or Winter Games! It can be your immediate family members, or include all the grandparents and cousins. Make the event complete with races, games and activities for all ages. Prizes for everyone and steaming mugs of hot chocolate all round!

- Challenge the younger kids to build and decorate the funniest miniature snowman;
- Hold a sled race where parents pull the kids and see who can cross the finish line first;
- Organize a scavenger hunt as teams looking for hidden objects with crafty clues starting inside, then moving to the outdoors for more family fun!

The planning and execution of these events will help strengthen family ties, and a day of fresh air has never been so much fun!

For more inspiration, check out this interactive game and a feature at morethanmedication.ca/holiday

Find Great Activities Your Family Can Enjoy | Super Fast, Super Easy Breakfast and Lunch Ideas

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Take a Breather.

It might seem obvious, but remember to breathe! While you may not have time to go to a spa during the busy holiday season, you can make time for yourself. Between holiday parties, shopping, cooking and concerts try a little deep breathing – it's the simplest and most natural way to relieve stress! So step back, relax and breathe, it will work wonders to keep your frazzled mind feel more centered.

TIP Sit or lie down comfortably in a quiet place, and try this simple exercise for a few minutes:

1. Close your eyes and loosen any muscles you feel are tense.
2. Place one hand on your upper chest and the other on your belly just above your waist.
3. Breathe in slowly through your nose, but focus on feeling your stomach expand, not your upper chest. You should feel the hand on your stomach rise.
4. Breathe out slowly through your mouth.
5. Repeat on the count of 3 (breathe in 3 – breathe out 3) and progressively increase the count as you relax.

You probably feel better already. If you don't, then take another minute or two. You'll get there ... just keep breathing.

Variation 1: Breathe in through your belly and this time allow your chest to expand and widen, filling up your entire lungs, from bottom to top.

Variation 2: After you breathe in, hold your breath for the same count. For example, breathe in for 3, hold for 3, breathe out for 3.

Got a few minutes? Take a break during your day with these two interactive, guided breathing exercises at morethanmedication.ca/holiday

Inhale, Exhale, Breathe! | The 5-Minute Stress Buster.

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Joy to the world.

This is the season to celebrate, but if you find yourself slipping into a more sombre mood there are lots of things you can do to bring back the joy. Acknowledge your achievements and your gifts by kicking back and enjoying life. Remember, a positive approach will lighten everyone's mood.

TIP Here are some ways to think and behave in a more positive way:

- Check yourself. Take negative thoughts and find a way to put a positive spin on them. So instead of thinking “I'm not going to get any better at this,” think, “I'll give it another try.” Or instead of, “It's too complicated,” try “I'll tackle it from a different angle.”
- Change your reactive words to proactive ones: Replace “I can't” with “I can” or “I want to.” Instead of, “I can't do it,” try “I can do it, it's an opportunity to learn something new.”
- Use short, strong positive statements in the present tense as if you have already obtained your goal. For example, “I am a great public speaker.” This will help reprogram your subconscious mind and increase your sense of self.
- Try visualization to “see” yourself radiate positive self-esteem. Really feel it – and become it. Picture yourself confident and successful in all situations.
- Be grateful. Every night, before going to bed, think of five things for which you are grateful. This will help you turn your focus to the positive and seek opportunities for learning and growth.

For more ways to put joy in your life, look at these features at morethanmedication.ca/holiday

A Little Laughter Goes A Long Way | Full Esteem Ahead!

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