

Staying healthy for the holidays

No matter how you celebrate the holidays, prioritizing the health of you and your loved ones can help you make the most of the season. Reflect on what steps you can take to prevent holiday burnout by considering some of the categories below.

Mental health

While the holidays often bring joy and celebration, that doesn't mean every aspect of them is easy. You may find yourself feeling sad, anxious, irritable or having trouble sleeping. Take a step back and evaluate how to best care for your emotional wellbeing.

Self-care

During the holidays, family gatherings and social outings can compete for your time and energy. Whether you indulge in a hot bath or treat yourself to a midday nap, taking care of yourself can help you enjoy your time with loved ones even more. Use a few of the self-care suggestions below to relax and recharge.

- Go for a walk outside
- Call an old friend
- Get a massage
- Write or doodle
- Watch a favorite holiday movie
- Snuggle with a pet

Time management

Taking care of yourself and others while accomplishing holiday tasks may leave you feeling stressed or disorganized. Prioritize what is important to you and give yourself permission to let some activities go this year to focus on your wellbeing. Outline a plan long before the holidays begin and don't forget to schedule breaks.

Setting boundaries

You don't have to agree to every invitation. Saying "no" sometimes will help you enjoy the activities you do participate in even more. While the holidays often emphasize giving back and spending time with others, setting healthy boundaries will ensure you have enough energy and time to take care of yourself too.

Reach out

If you feel lonely or isolated, seek out fellowship. Volunteering your time to help others is also a good way to lift your spirits and broaden your friendships. If you feel you need additional support, reach out to a mental health professional or your employee assistance program.

The holiday toolkit



Physical health

With busy calendars, changing weather and a bounty of delicious food, focusing on your physical health might seem like the last thing on your mind. Go into the holidays with a plan, so when the festivities are over, you'll still feel energized.

Exercise

Moving your body for 30 minutes each day can prevent numerous long-term health complications and improve your state of mind. Can you make physical activity a part of your holiday, vacation or special event? Try adding a morning or evening walk, swimming, dancing or yoga into your weekly routine.

Preventing illness

The holidays also mean flu season and increased risk of illness have begun. Wash your hands often to prevent the spread of germs, and dress for the weather to stay dry and warm when needed. While the pandemic won't present the same threat this year as it did in 2020, follow local guidelines for reducing risk of transmission. If you or a loved one starts feeling sick, stay home from outings or work and consider visiting a physician.

Diet

Holiday parties and family gatherings can challenge your healthy habits. You don't have to sacrifice all your favorite food and drink items but setting intentions about quantity and quality ahead of time can help you avoid overindulging. Have a plan for what types of food and drink you will consume and how often.

Staying healthy for the holidays is more than avoiding desserts or getting enough sleep. Incorporating even one small healthy action each day can make your holidays more enjoyable and relaxing.

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