

Stress No More and Sleep Enough!

How to manage your stress effectively to stay healthy during the holidays



Managing your stress effectively will help you stay healthy and able to appreciate the holidays.

Manage your time

- Plan ahead and be organized.
- Multi-task when you can: combine physical activity with shopping or cleaning.
- Shop at odd hours to avoid crowds.
- Think about the things that drive you crazy about the holiday season and have a plan for how you will deal with them.

Share or delegate chores

- Ask for help: have your kids or significant other help you with the shopping, cleaning, cooking and wrapping.
- If you are the host, ask everyone to bring something so you aren't preparing every dish.
- Try centering gatherings around an activity instead of a meal, so there is less prep time involved.

Take a break for yourself

- Take a break during the day for yourself — it will leave you refreshed and energized.
- Be realistic. Remember that your holiday celebration doesn't have to be perfect.
- Do things that you enjoy and take time to appreciate the holiday season.



What does sleep have to do with it?

Adequate sleep keeps you healthy, mentally sharp and able to cope with stress more effectively. Unfortunately, people who are stressed and busy tend to get less sleep than they need.

Factors that contribute to a lack of sleep include:

- **Over-thinking:** Trying to solve problems at the end of the day can make sleep difficult and disrupt your sleep cycles.
- **Caffeine:** Although it can keep you awake, it actually increases stress levels and significantly affects the amount and quality of your sleep.
- **Cortisol:** This hormone, which your body releases to help you respond to stress, can keep you awake if it is at high levels.
- **Over-scheduling:** Pushing your bed time back further and further to get things done, or getting up earlier and earlier in the name of productivity, may cause you to feel tired.
- **Anxiety:** A worried mind can rob you of sleep by keeping your cortisol levels high, making sleep harder to achieve.

Try these tips if you are short on sleep:

- Create a sleep environment that is dark, quiet, comfortable and cool.
- Establish a regular bedtime routine.
- Maintain a regular sleep and wake cycle even on the weekends.