10 ways to fight holiday stress

The holidays are just weeks away. No one wants to end up frazzled and stressed out from shopping, cooking, cleaning and entertaining. Check out these 10 stress-reducing tips, so you can enjoy the days ahead:

- Recognize your attitude and behavior. Are you on edge? Are you crying when you wouldn’t normally do so? Recognize mental changes and reach out to a trusted loved one or even your doctor.
- Don’t ditch routine. If you normally get up early before work to go on a three mile run, don’t give it up because it’s the season of overindulgence. Stick to your regular healthy meal plans, too.
- Don’t try to remake the “perfect holiday.” While you may find it hard to lower expectations, remember, that the holidays are about coming together.
- Go for the greens. Eating healthfully not only staves off the pounds, but it reduces inflammation as well.
- Moderation. Whether it’s the company holiday party or you’re attending a gift exchange with friends, remember that beer, wine and spirits have lots of calories. Limit your alcohol intake and drink lots of water.
- Don’t break the bank. Be thrifty with your gift-giving. Overspending can cause a lot of anxiety. Try shopping at thrift stores or identify a few special hand-me-downs or heirlooms to give as gifts, such as a handmade blanket or framed picture.
- Make a list. Check it twice. Planning ahead can reduce a lot of last-minute details — and stress.
- Seek out new traditions. Maybe it’s time to skip grandma’s buttery potato dumplings and Uncle Tom’s Uno marathon. Keep things exciting and fresh with new traditions.
- Have fun! It’s the season to be merry, after all!

The American Heart Association also offers five tips for a heart-healthy holiday Season at [http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/GettingHealthy/StressManagement/FightStressWithHealthyHabits/Manage-Holiday-Stress-Without-Hurting-Your-Heart_UCM_433252_Article.jsp](http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/GettingHealthy/StressManagement/FightStressWithHealthyHabits/Manage-Holiday-Stress-Without-Hurting-Your-Heart_UCM_433252_Article.jsp)

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