Surviving Holiday Stress

The winter holidays are upon us and typically they are filled with busy schedules, parties, shopping, and good food, but there can also be tension and stress. For many people, the holidays mean changes in work, exercise and dietary habits. These can lead to frustration and anxiety. Taking care of yourself becomes especially important during stressful times like the holidays. Try these tips to keep holiday stress under control and get the most out of the festive season.

Delegate

Does the house need cleaning or decorating? Let each family member be responsible for a room or a specific task. Consider hiring a cleaning service before and/or after the celebrations. You will be able to spend more time with your loved ones.

Exercise

Cardiovascular exercise, weight training, and yoga can reduce the level of stress hormones in your body, allowing you to cope more easily. It is also a great way to make a little time for you. Shoveling, ice skating, sledding and building snowmen are great winter activities that are fun but are also great exercises. Taking a nice walk with friends is another way to get some fresh air and catch up.

Avoid sugar

Sugar increases symptoms of irritability and anxiety in many people and weakens the immune system. It has also been found to diminish infection fighting white blood cell count for up to six hours after consumption. The holidays are the time for sweet treats, but try not to overdo it. One tip is to only eat home-baked goodies and avoid store-bought sweets. Eat a healthy snack before going to a party so you won't overindulge in fatty, salt-laden food because you are starving. Fill your plate with vegetables and other nutritious choices.

Drink enough water

Dehydration is one of the most common causes of headache, fatigue, joint pain and stiffness. Alcoholic beverages are dehydrating, so increase your intake of fresh, plain water.

Make a list and check it twice

A hectic schedule means that being organized and planning ahead is more important than ever. If you are laying in bed at night worrying about all the things you have to do, get up and make a "to do" list. It will help to clear your mind and get you back to sleep. Focus on the activities that are important and enjoyable and learn to say no.

Get enough sleep

Being well rested will allow you to have the energy to cope with the day's stresses. Be sure to get at least 7 to 8 hours a night. You'll find you have more energy and are able to get even more done in a shorter amount of time. As much as possible, stick to your regular bedtime routine and get up at the same time. People often suffer from headaches when they oversleep. You can take a nap in the afternoon as a well-deserved luxury.

Laughter is the best therapy

It may be a cliché, but it's a cliché that is actually true. People who laugh on a daily basis rate the stress in their life as lower and enjoy better health. So go ahead and giggle – it's good for you!