



Empowering you Organically - Season 8 – Episode 63

Title: 12 Ways to Keep Holiday Stress in Check

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Description: The holidays can be the most stressful time of the year. We over commit and leave our self-care routine behind as we shop, bake, attend parties, and get caught in the hustle and bustle of the holiday season. Before you get too far into the mayhem, we have 12 practical tips to help you enjoy the season and still keep your health and wellbeing in check. Join Jonathan and TeriAnn as they walk us through each tip so we can keep our holiday stress in check!

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Let's face it. While some people start listening to Christmas music the day after Halloween, others find this kind of behavior, well, just plain annoying. If you are among the millions who tend to get a little

overwhelmed with all the hype this time of year and maybe even downright depressed during the holidays, you are definitely not alone.

One survey found that close to half of the respondents said they “dreaded” the festive season.

Here are some quick tips to help you take a breather from all the holiday stress now and focus on a healthier YOU as we enter the holiday season and gear up for a new year.

#1: Take care of YOU first.

Remember that you are the only one who can determine your health needs in any season.

Are you feeling sad because of a recent hardship and need to reach out to a counselor or an understanding friend?

Are you overly stressed and just need some time out? Do you need to write some things down in a journal or go to a Zumba class just to “let it all out?”

This season, practice the art of tuning in to your own needs.

#2: Set boundaries with others.

One of the best ways you can beat holiday stress is to practice the art of saying “No.”

Many people feel overwhelmed, anxious, or depressed about spending time with family members that they may not have anything in common with or who may display inappropriate, disrespectful, or disturbing behaviors. Others may stretch themselves too thin doing things for others while neglecting their own needs.

For one week, **practice saying NO to favors**. Also, consider if excusing yourself from a gathering or two may be a possibility. If you can’t get out of the yearly get-together, set both internal and external boundaries before you go.

It’s okay to not interact with family members that are particularly inappropriate. Instead, choose to connect with someone at the event whom you enjoy or someone you haven’t had a chance to catch up with throughout the year.

#3: Don’t overdo the sugar.

It can be extremely difficult to resist that cheesy mashed potato dish or second helping of pecan pie. However, the fact is that overloading on sugar (especially high fructose corn syrup), alcohol, refined carbs and, for an increasing number of people, gluten and dairy, can intensely tax both the body and mind.

This adds additional stress to an already stressful time of year.

According to an investigation published in the journal *Diabetes, Obesity and Metabolism*, **high fructose corn is more detrimental to brain function than other sugar sources** since it can negatively impact the hypothalamus as well as raise cortisol levels. This can turn on inflammatory responses and lower immune function.

#4: Get creative with gift-giving.

In a culture that considers Black Friday another holiday, it's hard to resist the urge to spend, spend, spend during the holiday season. This is especially true if you are a parent and your kids begin dropping subtle (and not so subtle) hints regarding their holiday wish list in September.

Have a heart-to-heart with your child (or your spouse) if you must, and then get creative with gift-giving this year and avoid financial holiday stress.

#5: Have some fun.

What about a day in the mountains throwing snowballs, or a few hours at the beach making a sand snowman? How about stringing some popcorn to make tree decorations?

Research suggests that play is just as important for adults as it is for kids.

#6: Keep moving.

Exercise is good for your overall health in countless ways one article couldn't begin to sum up. In addition to lowering stress responses, consider this: new research suggests that regular exercise helps to convert "white" fat cells, a risk factor for cancer, to healthier "brown" fat cells.

A 2012 report published in the journal *Nature* suggests that **heat-generating brown fat can help you burn energy instead of storing it**. Other investigations point to regular exercise as a way to prevent "leptin resistance."

Leptin is a powerful hormone within fat cells that regulates appetite. This holiday season get creative with how you can fit exercise into an already tight schedule.

Start with something small such as parking at the far end of the mall so you can get a walk in while you shop. Or if you're really ambitious, fit in a short, intense Tabata workout.

#7: Don't ruminate but DO reflect on your life.

Several ancient traditions say that winter is a time to go within and reflect. For many, this may seem to be in direct contrast to what our modern society encourages.

Reflection, however, is not the same as rumination. Avoid getting stuck on past regrets by giving yourself a timeframe and an avenue for your reflection.

Write in a journal, make a creative collage, or work on a scrapbook for an hour or two to honor the past year. Then **do something fun and self-nourishing which can help you get back into the flow your life *now***, in the present moment.

#8: Go on holiday from the media.

A digital detox not only gives your brain a break from electromagnetic fields (EMFs) and your eyes a break from the screen, it also allows you to form your own concepts of what the holiday season may mean for you.

The media's job is to sell products, first and foremost. Those "perfect" depictions of holiday shopping sprees and merry families gathered by the fire are designed to make you feel like something is lacking in *your* life so that you will "spend" your way to happiness.

Ads and posts on Facebook and other social media channels can sometimes make you feel the same way. Don't buy into the hype; go on a digital detox instead. **This time away can give you a fresh perspective even if you abstain for just one day.**

#9: Cook up some goodness for yourself and others.

If baking cookies or whipping up the holiday dinner is your job, do something different this year. How can you kick it up a notch so that fresh, wholesome, and healthy holiday recipes are on the menu?

Better yet, consider making it a potluck this year so you don't have to do all the work. Make sure to specify that dishes be healthy, nutritional, organic, and low on sugars, if possible.

#10: Check your vitamin D levels.

Being in the sun is the best way to get your vitamin D. Moderate sun exposure can also provide you with a plethora of other health benefits, such as increased nitric oxide production to protect your cardiovascular system. Vitamin D deficiency is very common, especially if you live in a Northern climate or spend a lot of time indoors.

#11: Give yourself a gift.

What if you put yourself on your holiday shopping list? Would you give yourself the gift of an afternoon snuggled up with a good book, a new outfit, a day hiking in the woods, or a relaxing essential oils bath? Give it a try!

Include a gift for you in your time or money budget this year and notice how this one act of self-nurturing can help lift your spirits in a big way.

#12: Remember the true “reason for the season.”

Practicing gratitude during this time of year is a great way to switch your mood from “down in the dumps” to a lighter spirit. Believe it or not, practicing gratitude is a great way to detox and heal your body as well.

Studies have shown that practicing gratitude can not only increase happiness levels by 25%, it can also help you sleep better, help you recover faster after surgery, and lower stress hormones by 23%.

And it's easy! In a gratitude journal or just in your mind, focus on the simplest things first – the roof over your head, the food in your fridge, the clouds in the sky, the presence of a special friend, family member, or pet in your life. Even being appreciative for the fact that you are breathing can get the gratitude vibe going!

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Deeper Dive Resources

12 Tips to Beat Holiday Stress

<https://organixx.com/holiday-stress/>

How Healthy Are You? Take These 6 Simple DIY Tests to Find Out

<https://organixx.com/home-health-testing/>

How To Use Water To Heal Anxiety, Depression, and Sadness

<https://organixx.com/empowering-you-organically/how-to-use-water-to-heal-anxiety-depression-and-sadness-episode-31/>

What Causes Inflammation? The Top 10 Worst Offenders

<https://organixx.com/what-causes-inflammation/>

Stressed Out? 10 Adaptogenic Herbs That Help With Chronic Stress

<https://organixx.com/chronic-stress/>

What Is Tabata and Why Is It So Popular?

<https://organixx.com/what-is-tabata/>

Uplift Your Mind & Spirit: The Best Essential Oils for Meditation and Prayer

<https://organixx.com/meditation-and-prayer/>

Christmas depression: The data may surprise you

<https://www.mdedge.com/psychiatry/article/59771/depression/christmas-depression-data-may-surprise-you>

Seasonal Affective Disorder

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/seasonal-affective-disorder/index.shtml>

Seasonal Affective Disorder: An Overview of Assessment and Treatment Approaches.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26688752>

Play Doesn't End With Childhood: Why Adults Need Recess Too

<https://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2014/08/06/336360521/play-doesnt-end-with-childhood-why-adults-need-recess-too>

A PGC1- α -dependent myokine that drives brown-fat-like development of white fat and thermogenesis.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22237023>

5 Steps to a Perfect Essential Oil Bath that Soothes & Heals Your Body

<https://organixx.com/essential-oil-bath/>

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