

Holiday StressTips

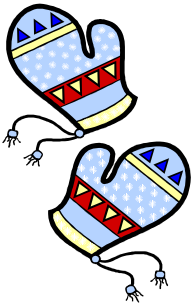
Holidays can be a time of immense joy – but they also can be a time of great stress. For happier, healthier holidays, consider the PAC principle – Plan, Attitude Adjustment, Communication:

Plan



- **Don't take responsibility for other people's holiday happiness.** Delegate activities so you're not always taking on more than you could hope to accomplish.
- **Do take responsibility for your own holiday fulfillment.** Decide what holiday activities nurture and support you, then do them.
- **Don't over-organize your life.** Leave room for enjoying the holidays minute-by-minute.
- **Plan time for spontaneity and fun.** Do something out of the ordinary. Buy a present for yourself and wrap it. Go to the mall and sit on Santa's lap.
- **Shop in small chunks of time.** Marathon shopping sessions generally lead to headaches, irritability and exhaustion.
- **Reconnect with the child in you.** Make ornaments, decorate your own wrapping paper, daydream.

Attitude Adjustment



- **Develop a positive, upbeat attitude.** Vow to make lemonade out of holiday lemons.
- **Remember that people are more important than things.** It doesn't matter when everything gets done, as long as you enjoy what you are doing.
- **Relax your expectations of yourself and others.** If others engage in petty or angry outbursts, talk in a soothing way or leave the room temporarily.
- **Take private time for yourself.** Allow yourself to renew your spiritual side.

Communication

- **Talk about your new-found plan for holiday time with your family.** Discuss and make plans about which rituals will be maintained, which will be discontinued and which will be developed.
- **Negotiate to get others to help with holiday chores.** If you've typically done all the shopping, wrapping, baking, tree trimming – STOP. Let others share in the fun.

If you are recovering from a loss due to death or divorce, let yourself see the holidays as a transition. Things are different. Find people who want to listen to you – friends, family, clergy, a therapist or a support group – and talk.

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