



TWENTY TIPS FOR MANAGING
HOLIDAY STRESS
IN AN ERA OF COVID AND UNCERTAINTY

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#1. TALK ABOUT IT



The holidays can already be stressful for many individuals and families. This year with COVID, that stress can be overwhelming, so we have put together 20 ways to manage holiday stress.

The first step is talking about stress. Consider making it a new healthy norm to discuss stress openly in the home. Simply checking in a few times a week can lower stress and create an avenue for a dialogue about difficult times. You can always find a friend, a loved one or a trusted colleague and privately talk about the things that are causing you stress this year.





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#2. FEEL YOUR FEELINGS

The second way to reduce stress is to feel your feelings (or write about how you are feeling in your journal or notebook). Research has shown that identifying our feelings and talking about them can decrease anxiety and depression and improve overall health and well-being.





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#3. TAKE A PAUSE FROM DEVICES

The holidays are a perfect time to put away the electronic devices and get away from the constant noise in the outside world.

Try:

- deleting apps from your phone
- setting times of the day that are social media free
 - giving yourself a time limit on social apps
 - setting your phone or device in another room





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#4. EXPLORE MINDFULNESS

The fourth holiday stress management tip relates to practicing mindfulness. Mindfulness is simply the act of being in the present moment without judgment and it has shown to decrease anxiety and depression. Here's a sample activity:

Mindful Breathing: <https://vimeo.com/411225572>





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#5. TAKE TIME AWAY FROM IT ALL TO REST

This holiday season, give yourself permission to do LESS, rather than more. How can you slow down and rest a bit more? Can you find a time to read a great book or just enjoy the outdoors for no reason at all? With everything we have all been through in 2020, there's no better time than the present to take time away from it all to rest.





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#6. EMPLOY HEALTHY SELF-I-TUDE

This holiday is a great time to employ healthy self-i-tude and give yourself permission to put your needs first, even if just for five minutes per day. Rather than feeling selfish for doing an activity that will make you shine, keep in mind that self-care is essential for your overall health and wellbeing. No time like the present to employ healthy self-i-tude!





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#7. GIVE YOURSELF A BREAK FROM RESPONSIBILITY

This holiday season, see if you can delegate or ask for help from someone -- even for just a few moments per day -- so you can give yourself a break from responsibilities. Is there a friend, relative or neighbor you can ask to step in? Finding a way to rest, catch up on sleep, get in a little exercise or a peaceful walk around the block is an important part of resilience. Give yourself a break from responsibilities -- even just for a moment -- and breathe!





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#8. SET BOUNDARIES

Setting boundaries is an important stress management technique.

It means assertively asking for what you need or requesting assistance from people you love. Setting boundaries is an effective way to strengthen a relationship and is a fabulous skill to learn no matter how old or young a person is.





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**#9. MAKE A GENUINE CONNECTION
WITH A FRIEND OR FAMILY MEMBER**

This year has been one of great isolation and distance that's why this holiday season is a time to reconnect with friends or family through a phone call or even by writing a letter. Reach out and connect with someone in your life who could use a little extra support today -- you will be amazed how fabulous it feels to strengthen those human connections in your life.





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#10. GIVE BACK

Giving back to the community or to organizations who rely on volunteers or charitable contributions can be a fabulous way to manage holiday stress. This year especially, so many nonprofit agencies have lost funding and resources due to COVID -- it is a wonderful time to make a huge difference. Connecting with our community and learning about ways we can support other human beings, is an essential part of our self-care and mental wellness.





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#11. WRITE IN A JOURNAL

Journal writing has shown to be a fabulous way to manage stress on a daily level. Here is a quick video outlining an easy technique that can be done by anyone in the family.

Gratitude Journal Activity
Video: <https://vimeo.com/411215524>





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**#12. ACCOMPLISH ONE THING THAT
SCARES OR INTIMIDATES YOU**

At times, the things that intimidate or frighten us might be the very things that could help reduce our stress. One way to address our fears is to try to do one thing that scares you each day. By setting a time to accomplish the goal, you are more likely to be successful. This holiday season ... send out that resume. Take that course you have been wanting to try. Pick up a new hobby that challenges you. There's no time like the present!





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#13. GET OUTSIDE IN NATURE

This holiday, don't forget to get outside and experience the beauty of nature. Enjoy a winter walk, a stroll at sunset, a ride on your bike ... just another way to breathe in some fresh air and appreciate the beauty that surrounds us.





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#14. EXPLORE YOUR ARTISTIC SIDE

Take yourself on an artist's date this holiday season and see the kinds of things your creative side would like to do. Maybe you have a craft or project idea? How about walking through an artist supply store and just noticing what resonates? The arts can be a fabulous way to cope with stress using nonverbal communication and imagery.





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#15. SET NEW GOALS FOR 2021

A new year is around the corner and there's no better time to set goals for your life on a personal, spiritual, professional and physical level. Goal-setting is a stress management technique that puts the power back into your hands. Feel anxious about financial health or resources? By setting goals you can immediately start seeing changes in positive ways.



BELIEVE IN YOURSELF

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#16. PRACTICE AFFIRMATIONS

2020 was a year filled with negativity and there's one proven strategy for turning negative thoughts into positive actions. Practicing affirmations assists with managing stress by taking the negative thoughts, phrases and concepts in our life and turning them into positives. For an entire lesson on affirmation writing, over 200 affirmation images and even a positive affirmation group ... check out the Sharpen app at [SharpenMinds.com](https://www.SharpenMinds.com).





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#17. SPEND TIME WITH A PET

This holiday season, spend some quality time with your furry friends. Keep in mind they have absorbed all of the tension from 2021, too. Give them an extra special walk around the block, or close cuddle. It helps them feel appreciated and it is great for your own health, too.





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#18. MEDITATE

Meditation has been shown to improve cardiovascular health, decrease stress, improve mental health and build resilience against other illnesses. Whether you spend 3 minutes or 30 minutes trying out a meditation, the benefits abound. For more than 25 different meditation techniques and simple activities, check out the [Sharpen app](#) with more than 450 modules on mental health and resilience featuring more than 200 experts.





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#19. TALK TO A THERAPIST

One of the best ways to reduce stress is to talk to a professional. Professional counselors and therapists offer outside viewpoints and medical strategies for improving your mental health and happiness.





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#20. EXERCISE

As you think about the new year, consider incorporating exercise as a stress management technique -- and as a way to bring new joy into your life. Rather than going to the gym because you have to, find time to enjoy some mentally healthy walks outside -- just to experience joyful movement.

How about roller skating or jumping rope, just because it brings you joy? Fitness and exercise are essential to overall health, and can be incredible ways to manage stress and bring joy and confidence back into your life.

