

BalancedLiving

October 2019



12 WAYS TO KEEP THE HOLIDAYS STRESS FREE

The holidays are supposed to be a time of warmth, joy and excitement. And for many people, they are.

Still, the anxiety of having too much to do in too little time, the pressure of unrealistic expectations and the tendency to overeat and overspend can easily overshadow holiday happiness. The following suggestions will help you enjoy the season to its fullest with a minimum of stress.



Eat smart

- Don't arrive at a party starving; you're likely to overeat. Instead, before you leave home eat a piece of fruit, a small salad or a cup of low-fat yogurt. Eating a healthful snack will prevent you from overindulging on mini quiches and other high-fat fare when you arrive.
- Avoid handfuls of anything. At the appetizer table, fill your plate three-quarters full with fresh vegetables and fruit. Reserve the remaining quarter for anything you want, even if it's high in fat, so you don't feel deprived.
- Don't feel obligated to eat everything on your plate or to have dessert. And think twice before going back for seconds.
- If you overeat, get right back into your normal routine the next day.

Shop smart

- Give yourself plenty of time to complete your holiday shopping. Shop with an itemized list of what you'll buy for each person and a ballpark figure of what you'll spend.
- Brainstorm for gift ideas. If you're stumped on what to buy, consider what's important to the gift recipient. To personalize a gift that isn't personal, give the story behind it. For a book, write an inscription that explains why you're giving it or mention specific pages the recipient may find interesting.

Party smart

- Keep parties simple by having a buffet instead of a formal sit-down dinner. Serve uncomplicated dishes (made with six ingredients or less) that you've made before.
- Buy nonperishable party items days, even weeks, in advance. These include groceries, beverages, candles, napkins and decorations. Save the day before to buy items with a short shelf life, such as fresh fruits, vegetables and flowers.
- Cook ahead. On the day before your party, prepare salad dressings, stews, casseroles, cold sauces, soups, desserts and dips. That way, during the party, you can spend as much time as possible with your guests.
- Hire a helper. To make your party more manageable, employ a teenager or a catering waiter to help you serve during the party and clean up afterward.
- Devise games guests can play to help spark conversation. For example, tape a piece of paper with the name of a movie character onto the back of guests when they arrive. Challenge them to guess who their characters are, with clues provided by the other guests.
- Be sociable. Attending parties when you don't know many people can be stressful. To break the ice, elect yourself the official introducer. If you see someone standing alone, go over and ask nonthreatening openers. For example, ask these questions at a corporate function: How do you fit into the company? Are you a spouse or an employee? What do you do? What does your spouse do?

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FOR PEACE OF MIND, ACT INSTEAD OF REACT



Some people's lives seem like a soap opera. But though endless crises and confrontations can be entertaining on TV, they make for frustrating, unsatisfying lives. If you'd rather have peace of mind than daily dramas, you need to take charge of the script.

"Learn to act for yourself instead of just responding to what's happening in your life," advises Gretchen Grindle, M.Ed., N.C.C., CEAP, a counselor in Virginia.

"Make deliberate choices about how you look at things -- and how you want to deal with them."

Most people react without thinking, "especially in situations in which they feel hassled or threatened," says Ms. Grindle. "We're constantly responding to stimuli -- an annoying co-worker, a whining child, a grumpy spouse. Instead of considering what's really going on or the most constructive way to respond, we often lash out in ways that aren't very helpful."

Of course, this usually results in negative consequences. If another person is involved, the result is likely to be hurt feelings, angry responses or out-and-out resistance.

Even when people are alone, they often let circumstances control them, instead of the other way around. For example, when you're caught in traffic, you feel powerless, so you make yourself miserable with anger or frustration.

"Instead, choose to use the time in a way that builds positive thoughts," says Ms. Grindle. "Do relaxation exercises, listen to a book on tape, plan what you'll do the rest of the day. You'll arrive just as soon, and in a much better frame of mind.

"Learn to separate what you can control from what you can't," says Ms. Grindle. "You can't control another person, and many situations are also beyond your power. You can only control how you act, so your focus should be on your contribution."

Act with care and courtesy

To start acting instead of reacting, Ms. Grindle says, "reflect on what has been working in your life and what hasn't. In the big picture, has your behavior been getting you where you want to be?"

Here are some more strategies that can help you be more active and less reactive.

- Make a daily to-do list. "Start each day by planning what you want to do and setting priorities. Even if you don't get everything done, the process is important," says Ms. Grindle. "You're reclaiming control instead of just putting out fires."
- Maximize your physical health. Being "all that you can be" increases your confidence and sense of control. A healthful diet, regular physical activity and enough sleep all help you feel up to daily challenges.
- Get a handle on anger. You may have a right to be angry, but you don't have a right to act destructively on that feeling. Walk away until you get hold of yourself.
- Let go of resentment. Carrying around old grievances is like keeping a 10-pound weight tied around your neck. You don't have to forgive old wrongs, but you can accept them and move on.
- Learn to listen. "Listening gives you power because it helps you learn more about the other person. It puts you in a better position to create a win-win situation," says Ms. Grindle.
- Speak respectfully to everyone. Simple courtesies set the stage for constructive interactions. Consider how others will respond to what you're about to say. If it's likely to cause hurt or anger, find a more positive way to make your point.
- Give others the benefit of the doubt. If someone in the express checkout line has a couple of extra items, forget it. If you make it your problem, it will haunt you the rest of the day.
- Count your blessings. Reminding yourself about the good things in your life is a great way to feel more competent -- and confident.

"Most people today lead lives that are ripe for stress," says Ms. Grindle. "Take time to claim some happiness -- kiss your spouse, hug your children. Whatever else you need to do, this is a very important action to take."

source: The StayWell Company, LLC ©2019

DIVORCE MEDIATION MYTHS

Myth: Mediation allows one spouse to dominate another.

Fact: A good mediator pays close attention to the power balance between the spouses and uses specific techniques to address any imbalance. If one spouse persists in dominating behavior, the mediator will call a stop to the mediation rather than allowing it to continue.

One caveat: Even the best mediator can be unaware of a power imbalance if it only goes on outside of the mediation sessions and the spouses don't let the mediator know about it.



Myth: Women are at a disadvantage in mediation.

Fact: Women are no more at a disadvantage in mediation than in divorce court. In fact, women can often obtain a better result in mediation than they can in court, because the mediation process allows separating spouses to negotiate an agreement that considers nonlegal factors. Also, except for court-ordered (mandatory) mediation, a woman is free to stop the mediation or refuse to sign an agreement that seems unfair to her.

Myth: Mediation is more of a hassle than hiring a lawyer to handle the divorce.

Fact: Whether divorcing spouses mediate or hire a lawyer to handle the divorce, they have to do a certain amount of gathering information and making decisions. Mediation offers a streamlined approach to the information-gathering and decision-making processes. In contrast, using the courts is cumbersome and expensive.

Myth: Mediation is for wimps.

Fact: In mediation, the spouses stand up for themselves and what they want. They don't have lawyers speaking for them and telling them what to do. As a result, people who mediate often come out of their divorce with enhanced communication skills and self-confidence, as well as agreements they can really live with.

Myth: Mediation makes the divorce take longer.

Fact: Mediation almost always takes less time than litigating a divorce. Unless the spouses have worked everything out ahead of time, hiring lawyers to handle the divorce will almost always take as long or longer than mediating, even if the lawyers are able to settle out of court.

Myth: There's no place for lawyers in mediation.

Fact: Lawyers who understand and support mediation can help mediating spouses in several ways: by informing them of their legal rights and options, by coaching them through the negotiations, by coming up with creative settlement ideas, and by preparing the necessary divorce paperwork once an agreement is signed. Most consulting lawyers charge a reasonable hourly fee and don't require a large retainer (advance deposit). A spouse pays for only as much consulting time as is needed.

Myth: All divorce lawyers understand and support mediation.

Fact: Divorce mediation is still a relatively new way of approaching divorce. Many adversarial lawyers have little or no experience with the nonadversarial approach used in mediation. Some even disapprove of mediation, arguing that divorcing spouses should not negotiate on their own but only through lawyers. These attitudes are slowly changing, as divorce lawyers become more aware of mediation and its benefits for their clients. Meanwhile, spouses wishing to mediate their divorce need to find consulting lawyers who are "mediation-friendly."

Myth: In mediation, the mediator decides what's fair.

Fact: Unlike a judge or an arbitrator, a mediator has no power to make decisions for the divorcing spouses. The mediator's job is to help the spouses negotiate an agreement that each of them considers fair enough to accept.

Myth: Mediation is always the best option for every divorcing couple.

Fact: Mediation works for most divorcing couples. As long as both spouses are able to speak up for what's important to them and can behave themselves appropriately in mediation, the process can work for them. On the other hand, mediation may not offer enough protection and structure for some couples. For example, a couple with domestic violence or substance abuse issues may need to have lawyers speak for them instead of trying to negotiate directly. In addition, some spouses may prefer to assume the risks and cost of adversarial litigation in order to make a point or assert a legal right rather than compromise in a settlement.

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The Wellness News

Tips and resources for living well

October 2019

Breast Cancer – Early Detection is Key

It is important to get a regular screening test to find breast cancer early and to find it before it causes symptoms such as a lump that can be felt. Early detection means finding and diagnosing a disease earlier, before symptoms start. Breast cancer is easier to treat successfully when it is found early, is small, and has not spread. Getting treatment and early detection are important in preventing deaths. Screenings for breast cancer include:

Mammograms:

According to The American Cancer Society, regular mammograms can help find breast cancer at an early stage, when treatment is most successful. A mammogram can find breast changes that could be cancerous years before physical symptoms develop. Decades of research shows that women who have regular mammograms are more likely to have breast cancer found early, are less likely to need aggressive treatment like surgery to remove the breast (mastectomy) and chemotherapy, and are more likely to be cured. Mammograms are not perfect, as they miss some cancers. It is important that women getting mammograms understand the limitations and benefits and know what to expect.

Breast Ultrasound:

A breast ultrasound is used to examine types of breast changes such as lumps or changes in women with dense breast tissue. It can also be used to look at a change that was identified on a mammogram. An ultrasound can often differentiate fluid-filled cysts, which are unlikely to be cancer, and solid masses, which may require further testing to rule out cancer. Ultrasounds can also be used to help guide a needle biopsy, which is another breast cancer detection method used, into an area so that cells can be collected and tested for cancer. A breast ultrasound is widely available, easy to have, cost effective, and does not expose a person to radiation.



Breast MRI Scans:

Women who are at high risk for breast cancer based on certain factors should get an MRI and a mammogram every year, typically starting at age 30. The American Cancer Society considers women at high-risk of breast cancer if they:

- Have a lifetime risk of breast cancer of about 20 to 25% or greater, according to risk assessment tools that are based mainly on family history
- Have a known BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene mutation, based on having had genetic testing
- Have a first-degree relative (parent, brother, sister, or child) with a BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene mutation, and have not had genetic testing themselves
- Had radiation therapy to the chest when they were between the ages of 10 and 30 years
- Have Li-Fraumeni syndrome, Cowden syndrome, Bannayan-Riley-Ruvalcaba syndrome, or have first-degree relatives with one of these syndromes

The American Cancer Society recommends against MRI screening for women whose lifetime risk of breast cancer is less than 15%. They also recommend that an MRI, if used, to be in addition to, not instead of, a screening mammogram. Although an MRI is more likely to detect cancer than a mammogram, it may still miss some cancers that a mammogram would detect.

Clinical Breast and Self-Exams:

While research has not shown a clear benefit of regular breast exams done by either a health professional (clinical breast exams), or by yourself (breast self-exams), it is important that women be familiar with how their breasts normally look and feel and report any changes to their health care provider.

Newer and Experimental Breast Imaging Tests:

According to the American Cancer Society, newer types of tests are being developed for breast imaging. Some of these are already being used in certain situations, while others are still being studied. It will take time to see if any are as good as or better than those used today.

A newer type of mammogram is breast tomosynthesis or 3D mammography. For this test, a machine takes many low-dose x-rays as it moves over the breast. A computer then puts the images together into a 3-dimensional picture.

Optical imaging tests pass light into the breast and then measure the light that returns or passes through the tissue. The technique does not use radiation and does not require breast compression. Studies going on now are looking at combining optical imaging with other tests like MRI, ultrasound, or 3D mammography to help look for breast cancer.

Remember to discuss your risk with your health care provider to choose and better understand the best screening method for you. Early detection is key.

Breast Cancer – Know the Risks



October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, a time to increase awareness about the disease and inspire all women to be proactive about their breast health. Aside from skin cancer, breast cancer is the most common cancer among American women. About 1 in 8 women in the US will develop breast cancer in their lifetime.

Share the information below with a loved one to remind them of the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle and what risk factors they should be aware of for breast cancer.

Reducing Risk Factors

A risk factor is anything that can increase your risk of getting a disease, such as breast cancer. Certain cancers have been linked to certain risk factors. For example, smoking is a risk factor for lung and mouth cancer, while exposure to strong sunlight is a risk factor for skin cancer. Some risk factors, like age and family history, can't be changed. Others are related to personal choices that can be changed, such as diet, exercise, and alcohol use.

The following are examples of risk factors that can be changed. Working to improve these lifestyle-related risks can decrease your risk of developing breast cancer.

- **Birth Control:** Some birth control methods use hormones, which might increase breast cancer risk. Studies have found that women using oral contraceptives are at a slightly greater risk of developing breast cancer than women who have never used them. This risk appears to reduce to normal over time after the pills are stopped. When thinking about taking birth control pills, be sure to talk with your doctor about any other risk factors for breast cancer.

- **Hormone Therapy After Menopause:** Hormone therapy (HT) with estrogen, often combined with progesterone, has been used for many years to help relieve symptoms of menopause and to help prevent osteoporosis. Use of combined hormone therapy after menopause increases the risk of breast cancer. It may also increase the chances of dying from breast cancer. This increase in risk can be seen with as little as 2 years of use. Combined HT also increases the likelihood that the cancer may be found at a more advanced stage. The increased risk from combined HT appears to apply only to current and recent users. A woman's breast cancer risk seems to return to that of the general population within 5 years of stopping treatment. The decision to use HT should be made by a woman and her doctor after weighing the possible risks and benefits (including the severity of her menopausal symptoms), and considering her other risk factors for heart disease, breast cancer, and osteoporosis.
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- **Breastfeeding:** Some studies suggest that breastfeeding can decrease the risk of developing breast cancer, especially in women who breastfeed for 1 ½ to 2 years. But this has been hard to study, especially in countries like the United States, where breastfeeding for this long is uncommon. The explanation for this possible effect may be that breastfeeding reduces a woman's total number of lifetime menstrual cycles (the same as starting menstrual periods at a later age or going through early menopause).
 - **Drinking Alcohol:** Excessive alcohol consumption is known to increase the risk of developing several types of cancer, including breast cancer. The risk increases with the amount of alcohol consumed. Compared to non-drinkers, women who consume 1 alcoholic beverage per day have a very slight increase in risk of developing breast cancer while those who have 2 to 3 drinks per day have about a 20% higher risk.
 - **Being Overweight or Obese:** Being overweight or obese after menopause can increase breast cancer risk. The connection between weight and breast cancer risk is complex. If you're at a healthy weight, make it a goal to maintain your weight. If you're overweight or obese, talk with your doctor about a goal weight that's right for you. Your Health Coach can help you work towards your weight loss goals!
 - **Physical Activity:** Evidence is growing and supporting the fact that increased exercise each week can help reduce the risk of developing breast cancer, especially in women past menopause. The American Cancer Society recommends that adults get at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity exercise each week. If you're not currently exercising, make a point to talk to your doctor about a safe exercise program.

Some women will get breast cancer without any risk factors and having a risk factor does not mean that you will get the disease. If you have questions or concerns, talk with your health care provider about ways to lower your risk and what screenings are appropriate for you.

We know it is not always easy to juggle everything & realize simple tips can help provide a different approach. Your EAP is here to help with family, work, health, well-being & legal issues.

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Here for you as life happens ...

Crustless Pumpkin Pie



Ingredients

- 1 tsp Pumpkin pie spice
- 2 tsp Cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp Salt
- 2 tsp Baking powder
- 1/3 cup Whole wheat white flour
- 1/3 cup Brown sugar
- 2 Stevia packets
- 1 (15 oz) can 100% Pumpkin purée
- 3/4 cup + 2 Tbsp Skim milk
- 2 Tbsp Canola oil
- 1 Tbsp Ground flaxseed
- 2 1/2 tsp Pure vanilla extract

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F.
2. Lightly spray a 10-inch round pan with non-stick spray.
3. In a large mixing bowl, combine pumpkin pie spice, cinnamon, salt, baking powder, whole wheat white flour, brown sugar and stevia packets. Stir well.
4. In a separate bowl, combine pumpkin purée, skim milk, canola oil, ground flaxseed and vanilla extract. Whisk together.
5. Pour the wet ingredients into the dry ingredients and combine.
6. Pour into the greased 10-inch round pan and bake for 35 minutes.
7. Remove from the oven and let cool completely. Once cooled, let the pie set in the refrigerator for at least 6 hours prior to serving.

Health Tip: *Early Detection is the Key*

Perform a breast self-exam each month.

- Discuss breast changes/abnormalities with your healthcare provider
- Talk with your doctor about scheduling a yearly mammogram
- Reduce your risk factors by leading a healthy lifestyle

Action: *Spread the word* – talk with family and friends about the steps for detecting breast cancer early.



Exercise and Breast Cancer

Exercise is an important part of a healthy lifestyle as there are many health benefits to regular physical activity. According to the Mayo Clinic, regular exercise helps prevent or manage many health problems and concerns, including:

- Stroke
- Metabolic syndrome
- High blood pressure
- Type 2 diabetes
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Arthritis
- Many types of cancer



Exercise has been scientifically linked to reduce the risk of developing breast cancer. A scientific study by Mindy Kurzer, PhD, a professor of medicine at the University of Minnesota, et al., determined that exercise significantly reduces the risk of breast cancer due to reducing the amount of certain cancer-causing estrogen byproducts in the body. Kurzer and her colleagues believe exercise may alter the activity of your body's enzymes, which in turn changes the way enzymes break down estrogen into dangerous or benign byproducts. Among women in the study who exercised, the ratio of good to bad estrogen byproducts improved roughly 25%, Kurzer adds.

Current recommended exercise guidelines are to aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity exercise each week. Moderate exercise raises your heart rate to a point where you can still talk but it may be a little difficult. This is the talk test. It can be a brisk walk, a bike ride, or any activity that raises your heart rate.

Not only can exercise help prevent breast cancer, it can be an important part of recovery should you have had any testing or surgery for breast cancer. For example:

- Breast biopsy
- Lymph node biopsy or removal
- Breast conservation surgery (lumpectomy)
- Mastectomy
- Breast reconstruction

According to the American Cancer Society, any of these can affect how well you can move your shoulder and arm, take a deep breath, or do your daily activities, like dressing, bathing, and combing your hair. Pain and stiffness can cause weakness and limit movement of your arm and shoulder. Exercises help to decrease side effects of your surgery and help you get back to your usual activities.

Be sure to talk to your doctor about what exercise is appropriate for you. Remember to start any exercise program slowly and work up to your goal. Seek the assistance of a certified fitness professional should you need assistance with an exercise program appropriate for your needs and goals.

Marijuana and the Developing Brain



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Is Your Patience Running Thin?



Patience is a learned skill, but unlearning patience can happen in our quick-to-deliver technological world. A study from the United Kingdom found that most people demonstrate a short fuse at 25 seconds for a red light, 16 seconds for a web page to load, and 28 seconds for a cup of tea to boil. Recapturing your sense of patience starts with awareness of how impatience increases stress and how undesirable experiencing anger can be. Don't get mad at technology or lose yourself to a fast-paced, hurry-up society. Instead, practice patience by challenging yourself when the opportunity appears. From red traffic lights to checkout lines, you will have plenty of opportunities to react as usual or rebel. Choose the slower line at a drive-in, the longer line at the checkout counter, or learn how to use waiting time to complete a to-do list or another cerebral task. While waiting, notice the world around you and enjoy escaping the pressure as you take back control over the push to be impatient. Celebrate taking charge, getting your life back, and having more resilience to withstand everyday life events we all find stressful. If pressure builds, breathe in slowly, hold it a few seconds, and exhale slowly to reinforce a relaxed feeling.

Improving Communication with Your Boss



A top stressor for many employees is relationship conflict with the boss. But delve deeper and what often appears is irregular or unclear communication. A quiet supervisor one day or an abrupt short answer to a question the next might leave you distracted and wondering about the status of your relationship. "Is everything all right with my work?" "Is the boss upset with me?" "What's on his (her) mind?" Avoid these stressful guessing games. Early on or starting now in your relationship, get clarity with three "traditions:" ask your boss how he or she likes to communicate and how much; ask about the perceived acceptability of your work periodically; and be personable (i.e., "How was your weekend?"). Small civil exchanges make it easier to engage and increase the likelihood you'll team up earlier, more often, and more effectively when the going gets tough.

Organizational Change and Older Workers



If you have a work history where change came slowly, today's organizational change can be a shocker. It is often sudden and disruptive. If you're feeling overwhelmed, stay positive. Avoid cynicism.

Let your employer know what will help you be more productive and contribute more. Avoid isolation, remain engaged, and keep a close circle of workers you can turn to for clarification on change and its impact on your work unit. If you're thinking, "Wow, I have never seen things this bad," turn to the EAP for support to process fears of uncertainty and loss, and allow the program to talk you through your next move, life step, finding more meaning in your current job, examining opportunities, and making the best of where you are right now. Such conversations fall under EAP confidentiality.

Are You Addicted to Your Smartphone?



Smartphone addiction is not a recognized mental disorder, but it gets a lot of attention in the news. One in three people can't get through a meal without looking at their phones,

according to one study. Signs of problematic phone use may include feeling anxious without your phone, constantly checking your phone without a reason, reaching for your phone when bored, losing track of time while using your phone, being distracted while with friends or watching TV because you are on your phone, and texting while driving—especially after attempts to stop the practice following a near accident or close call. Compulsive behaviors are actions people engage in repeatedly even though they wish they could stop. Smartphone addiction can be one of them. Don't stay frustrated, feeling out of control. Talk with a counselor or your EAP.

We know it is not always easy to juggle everything & realize simple tips can help provide a different approach. Your EAP is here to help with family, work, health, & legal issues.

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