

STRATEGIES for MINDFUL LIVING

Courtesy of UAB Employee Assistance & Counseling Center

Holiday Stress Tips

This has been a difficult year for many people due to COVID-19. The last thing we need is more money worries, more hassles, and more STRESS. Unfortunately, that is exactly what the holidays can bring. The following holiday stress tips were created with the holiday season and pandemic in mind. Take this opportunity to end the year on a positive note.

1. Don't sweat the small stuff.

Forget what a perfect holiday is "supposed" to be like. Life isn't perfect — it's messy, disorganized and can be full of surprises. Instead of focusing on real or imaginary shortcomings, what's missing, and "oh, where's that feeling?" break out a notebook and list one thing you're proud of and one thing you are grateful for each day during the holiday season. Place this on your office desk and use it as a pick-me-up year-round.



2. List your biggest stressors.

How many can you discard? Are all the greeting cards you send a "must"? If not, stop sending so many. Instead, take the opportunity to catch up with loved ones by calling or video chatting with everyone on your "heart list." Current social distancing precautions require us to downsize our holiday celebrations, which equals less stress with food

preparation and cleaning your home. Take the time to enjoy the break from extra company.

3. Keep a regular schedule. Grab your calendar now and list holiday tasks that you can fit into your existing routine. Make just one big task your priority for each day. Start early and pace yourself.



4. Save money by changing the rules on gift giving. This year you have the perfect excuse to pare down your exchange list. And it's OK! Try eliminating gift card swaps. You'll save time and gas money. If you have a big family, agree that only the kids get presents this year, but be sure they aren't receiving more than they need.

5. Shop online from home. Avoid getting out when possible by visiting the websites of stores you frequent for gifts. There are plenty of deals and discounts available right now, however remember to shop early due to potential delays in shipping.



6. Make cooking easy on yourself.

Simplify your recipes and make dishes a few days early. They'll keep just fine. If you've saved enough by cutting back on gifts, consider paying for precooked meals that you can just warm up in your oven.

7. Maintain your self-care routine.

Now is not the time to let go of the activities that help you de-stress. In addition, don't forget to get plenty of rest, exercise, eat nutritious foods and drink plenty of water at the very least.



8. Finally, remember this rule:

If it's not worth taking action on, it's probably not worth worrying about.