

Stress Relieving Tips for the Holiday Season:

1. **Mindfulness Breathing Practice**-take 2-3 minutes as often as possible throughout the day to pay attention to your breath. Put your hands on your abdomen and notice the expansion of the lungs as you inhale with first one nostril and then the other. Have you ever realized before that your normal breath is through one nostril at a time?
2. **Gratitude Journal**-a simple spiral notebook and a pen is all you need to focus on the meaningful things that are easily overlooked during the holiday hustle and bustle.
3. **Take Time to sip a cup of tea**-Take a few minutes to sip your favorite caffeine free herbal tea this season.
4. **Devote 15 minutes to pleasurable reading** that allows you to escape reality for a bit.
5. **Outsource where possible** aka Ask for help-Have the butcher cut your meat, have a friend over to do holiday meal prep together.
6. **Plan-ahead.** Have a large family and feel like you need gifts for more people than your budget is comfortable supporting? Organize a family activity, a homemade gift exchange, a maximum gift budget, or draw names to choose whose gift each person will buy.
7. **Use live aromatherapy that serves a purpose.** Replace synthetic fragranced candles, wax melts or overuse of essential oils with a hearty soup on the stove, stew in the crockpot, cookies in the oven, or save your citrus rinds and simmer them on the stove to brighten the air and the mood. Be sure to set a timer so the pot doesn't simmer dry.
8. **Schedule time for proper self-care.** Listen to your body. Feeling worn down? Go to bed as early as possible. Take a nap on the weekend. Drink half your body weight in ounces of water.
9. **Ask for what you want.** If a loved one asks you for gift ideas think about the things you never say yes to for yourself.
10. **Practice Self forgiveness.** Realize no one walking the planet is perfect. We learn more from our mistakes than our successes. Look for the lesson in anything you feel you've failed at and then it's no longer a failure it's a learning experience.
- 11, **Start a list of self-affirmations.** Our brain believes what we tell it, so focus on the positives.
12. **Laughter**-find a YouTube video or set a Pandora station of a favorite comedian and take time to watch or listen and enjoy it.
13. **Let go of things that just add to the stress.** Look critically at your list of things to be done. What can you remove from the list? Is there anything that can be removed? Do you really need four different pies or will one pie and one batch of cookies do?
- 14.**Trade with a friend.** Do you have a recipe or skill that you can trade for things you need? Maybe you're the master cookie baker and you know someone who makes holiday candies or pies. See if they're interested in a trade.

May your holidays be filled with good times, good friends, good food and good scents.

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