

Get out of the house.

Health.com notes that, if your family fights a lot at the holiday table, you might want to consider taking the family holiday meal to a restaurant. "Being in public discourages loud voices and bad behavior."

Meditate.

Walking meditation, prayer, tai chi, guided meditation, or just stopping to breathe can help restore your calm and inner peace. In fact, pressure on the webbing between the thumb and index finger is one of the acupressure points to relieve stress and anxiety. Check out more at accupressurepointsguide.com.

Go tech-free.

Cell phone buzzers and email alerts actually keep us in a state of fight or flight due to bursts of adrenaline. Turn off the electronics and try that old-fashioned thing called conversation during your family gatherings.

Beware of office party blunders.

Don't get drunk. Eat something if you do drink. Dress appropriately. In other words, remember the "office" part of office party and don't behave in a way that will increase your stress when you wake up the next morning!

Count your blessings.

Write in a journal about the things you've survived in the past year. And write about the good things. Include notes about your friends and how they've helped you. Then consider telling them what they mean to you. Even in the darkest times, there are people who make our world better. Let them know it.

Ask for help.

Ask for help. Don't try to do everything yourself. If you feel overwhelmed or depressed, talk to someone about it. Getting it out of your system can really help, and you'll probably find someone who has ideas to make things easier for you at this busy time of year.

Keep learning.

Google *stress relief*, *stress management*, or any associated terms for great ideas to help you through the holiday season. For more help, take CPTP's online classes on *Stress Management* or *Working through Challenging Times*. For more ideas, visit sites like WebMD.com and Health.com, where we found a number of the ideas you're reading right now!



HOLIDAY STRESS BUSTERS



Success Series Webinars

HOLIDAY SEASON
STRESS
BUSTERS



A Production of the CPTP Team

DON'T LET **STRESS**
TAKE THE JOY OUT
OF YOUR HOLIDAYS!

Thanks for joining us in discovering ways to de-stress our holidays! And thanks for all the suggestions during our Third Thursday Webinar on ways to reduce stress for ourselves and our friends.

Inside you'll find tips to help make this season happier, healthier, and less stressful. Share these with others and keep an eye on the stress levels of friends, family, and coworkers to see if they need your help!

MANAGE EXPECTATIONS	PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR STRESS	HOLIDAY STRESS-BUSTERS	
<p>Everything doesn't have to be perfect!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Just because the people on television have a beautiful table where no one is fighting and not a single kid is flinging mashed potatoes doesn't mean that's going to be your holiday meal. Laugh and go with the flow. <input type="checkbox"/> If people say, "We've always done it this way," remind them that if they want it done that way, they are welcome to do the work! <input type="checkbox"/> If you hear yourself saying the words, "I HAVE to..." Stop. Ask yourself if you really "have to." Chances are a lot of those "have-to's" are optional activities that you feel obligated about because of past experiences. It doesn't mean they're still necessities. <input type="checkbox"/> Stop comparing yourself to the Joneses who have the 100,000 Christmas lights on their house. After all, do you really want their electricity bill? <input type="checkbox"/> Narrow down your list of activities. Do a few things well instead of a lot of things halfway. If you add something to your list, look to see if there's something you can remove or delegate to offset it. 	<p>How do you feel right now?</p> <p>If you notice any of these symptoms, it's time to stop, breathe, and de-stress with some of our stress-busting tips.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Fatigue <input type="checkbox"/> Headache <input type="checkbox"/> Upset stomach <input type="checkbox"/> Muscle tension <input type="checkbox"/> Change in appetite <input type="checkbox"/> Teeth grinding <input type="checkbox"/> Jaw clenching <input type="checkbox"/> Irritability <input type="checkbox"/> Anger <input type="checkbox"/> Feeling nervous <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of energy <input type="checkbox"/> Cold or sweaty hands or feet <input type="checkbox"/> Depression <input type="checkbox"/> Avoiding others <p>Remember, if you find yourself struggling with depression or stress this holiday season – or anytime – ask for help.</p> <p>There are many resources available to help in the form of support groups, online counseling sites, church and spiritual groups, and friends, family, and coworkers. We can all use (and give!) a little help from time to time!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Laugh. Laughter increases endorphins (yep, just like exercise), stimulates circulation, releases neuropeptides (don't ask the definition, but they fight stress), and more. Check out some funny websites. Keep that favorite fun movie on hand, and share a laugh with friends. <input type="checkbox"/> Take a whiff of citrus. Research has found that certain citrus fragrances boost feelings of well-being and alleviate stress by upping levels of norepinephrine, a hormone that affects mood. Keep lemon or orange essential oils on hand for a quick pick-me-up. Or, as one of our viewers noted, a good old Louisiana Satsuma might be just what you need! <input type="checkbox"/> Hit the gym. Research has found that workouts can boost your mood for up to 12 hours. The Mayo Clinic notes that exercises pumps up endorphins, improves your mood, and can increase self-confidence. If done regularly, it can relax you, improve sleep, and lower the symptoms of mild depression and anxiety.. <input type="checkbox"/> Take a walk. No time for the gym? How about a brisk walk? Wellness expert Ann Kulze, MD, notes that "The rhythm and repetition of walking has a tranquilizing effect on your brain, and it decreases anxiety and improves sleep." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Limit couch time. Television or internet time can be a good way to unwind, but too much of a good thing may find you binge-watching shows or realizing after two hours that you're looking at people on Facebook that you don't even know. Set an alarm to remind you that you've been sedentary for a long time. <input type="checkbox"/> Stick to a budget. A number of our webinar viewers noted that putting aside a little money each month and sticking with a budget really helps keep holiday expenses from being a stressor. <input type="checkbox"/> Let go of old customs. Abandon old customs if they are too much of a reminder of times you're missing or people you've lost. Instead, find new customs to try. Connect with a group of individuals who might be alone during the holidays and create a new holiday tradition! <input type="checkbox"/> Listen to music. Music can relax blood vessels and increase blood flow. And, depending on what you listen to, it could just inspire you into your own jazzercise session as you clean house! <input type="checkbox"/> Simplify. Simplify. Simplify. Are holiday cards needed this year? Maybe a phone call would be a simpler, more personal replacement.