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The holidays come with plenty of joy: spending time with friends and family; giving (and receiving) gifts; decorating the house and enjoying all those holiday goodies.

Of course, these all lead to plenty of holiday stress: spending time with people you don't normally want to be with; crowds at every corner; having to find the "perfect" gift; finding the time to decorate, and of course, weight gain from overindulging in all the goodies.

Here's a few ideas to help make this Christmas a bit less stressful:



Don't deny yourself treats – studies show it could result in a binge later on. Just remember, moderation is the key! Consider bringing a healthy option to the holiday table, so it isn't all about the sweets. Or, have a healthy snack before that Christmas party so you're less likely to crave all those sweets!

We often feel stress because we think we need to find (and pay for) the "perfect" Christmas gift. Hand-made gifts are often appreciated and many are very simple to create. Or, choose a gift that goes to a good cause instead.



Set gift giving limits. Suggest a secret Santa, and set a limit on the value of the gift.

Buy yourself some flowers!

Studies show people feel better when they see flowers first thing in the morning, and the energy boost can last for hours. Try poinsettias to put you in the spirit of the season.



Get involved in your community!

Stop by your local parades and tree lighting ceremonies. They are fun, free and social. You can also contribute to (or start) a local toy drive. Nothing feels better than giving back to the community.

Take a day off. It's often difficult to do, but try for a single day where you have no responsibilities. Watch a movie you have been wanting to see, spend time with your significant other, start a new book. Do whatever would be relaxing to you.

If you can't swing a full day off, at least make some time for yourself. Taking 15 minutes alone, with no distractions, may refresh you enough to help you complete everything you need to do.

DECEMBER *Safety Talk*

Topic: Avoiding Holiday Meltdowns

Remember to exercise! A 30 minute walk a day can go a long way to relieving stress. If you have a family, find something the whole family can do to get outdoors – even if it's just to build a snowman!



And finally, **learn to say "no thank you" or just plain "no"**. Do you really need to have 20 people over for dinner? Do you really need to have the most decorated house in the neighborhood? Recognize your "triggers", and you may find you are much less "stressed" over the holiday season.

