



# Handling holiday demands and emotions

December 2014 Newsletter

For many people, holiday season means party cheer, shopping fun and family get-togethers. For others, the time around the holidays can be difficult. There may be stress, disappointment, guilt and sadness. For most of us, there may be a mixture of both.

## Is this you during holiday season?

- All your “free” time is booked with errands and shopping.
- You go overboard on spending for gifts and holiday items.
- You’re too busy to keep up your normal exercise routine.
- A full night’s sleep is a luxury until after New Year’s.
- You wind up doing most of the work for family gatherings.
- You’re sorry you said “yes” to many parties and events.
- You can’t wait until the holidays are over!

## Take steps to help yourself

If you’re stressed or blue, you can do something about it. You might be tempted to blame hyped-up advertising or a consumer-crazy culture for the pressure you feel. But the solution is in your hands.

Holiday time doesn’t have to be a long list of obligations. You really can control what you choose to do or pass on. Once you realize this, you can begin to change the way you handle holiday demands and emotions.

## Tips for a happier holiday

Start by being more realistic about expectations you have of yourself and those in your life.

- **Give yourself and others a break.** Don’t be overly critical if things don’t go as planned.

- **The holidays may be a magical time of the year, but don’t expect them to solve all your personal or family problems.**
- **Manage your time.** Don’t say “yes” when you really mean “no.”
- **Create a to-do list.** Write down everything you intend to buy, make or send. Now prioritize your list and see if you can cross off any “low priority” tasks.
- **Stay healthy.** Watch what you eat and drink, get enough sleep and make time for exercise.
- **Give out jobs.** Involve family members in holiday tasks and preparations.
- **Be choosy about which events you attend.** Select the ones that’ll add to your holiday happiness.
- **Carve out times to recharge.** Get a massage, soak in a long bath or take a night off to read or watch TV.
- **If you’re away from family and friends or have lost a loved one, realize that it’s normal to suffer sadness and pain.** Let others know how you feel so they can help. Keep the demands on your time, energy and emotions to a minimum. It’s okay to skip an activity if you’re not feeling up to it right now.

## Focus on what you really want

The holidays should lift our spirits, not deplete them. Think about what’s most important to you and your family and put your time and energy into those areas.

Make honest choices and realistic plans. Be sure to leave room for your feelings. Who knows? It could be your most satisfying holiday season ever.