

The holidays are right around the corner — are you having fun yet?

Thanksgiving and the winter holidays can be filled with busy schedules, parties, shopping, laughter, but for some people, the holidays bring unwelcome guests — stress and depression. And it's no wonder. In an effort to pull off a perfect Hallmark holiday, you might find yourself facing a dizzying array of demands. So much for peace and joy, right?

Actually, with some practical tips, you can minimize the stress and depression that often accompany the holidays. You may even end up enjoying the holidays more than you thought you would.

Reassess and Prioritize. Holiday stress sets in when you try to do it all. Change your demands to preferences. Believe it or not, people will understand if you can't do certain projects or activities. If you say yes only to what you really want to do, you'll avoid feeling resentful and overwhelmed.

Stick to a Budget. Before you go shopping, decide how much money you can afford to spend on gifts and other items. Then be sure to stick to your budget. If you don't, you could feel anxious and tense for months afterward as you struggle to pay the bills.

Be Realistic About Relatives. When the in-laws visit this season, have realistic expectations for the short term. Don't try to solve past issues with family members over the holidays. And if going to a certain relative's house every year causes a lot of stress; decide if you really need to do it. Maybe you can go every other year instead.

Take a Breather. While you may not have time every day for a silent night, make some time for yourself. Spending just 15 minutes alone, without distractions, may refresh you enough to handle everything you need to do.

Rethink Resolutions. Resolutions can set you up for failure if they're unrealistic. Don't resolve to change your whole life to make up for past excess. Instead, try to return to basic, healthy lifestyle routines. Set smaller, more specific goals with a reasonable time frame. Choose resolutions that help you feel valuable and provide more than only fleeting moments of happiness.

Remember Cascade Centers, Inc. your Employee Assistance Program as a resource to help you learn more satisfying ways to enjoy the holiday season.

**Toll free 1-800-433-2320
503-639-3009 in Portland, 503-588-0777 in Salem**

