



Holiday Stress: 25 Seasonal Soothers for a More Joyful November & December by award-winning author / stress-relief expert Susie Mantell

If this holiday season finds you not-so-very-merry, try these stress-relief strategies to replenish a weary spirit. Winter bustles with list-making, mall-crawling, web-surfing... Then, the delicious sigh of relief as the last ribbon is curled. Creating a joyous, meaningful holiday season is never quite as easy as it looks. So, as Thanksgiving approaches, plan ahead, pace yourself, and you'll find yourself enjoying the season more.

For many, this season tends to create over-the-top stress levels and at the end of the day, most of us find attention to personal needs somewhere at the bottom of our Holiday List. Balancing personal needs and professional responsibilities, while meeting family demands, challenges the physical, emotional and spiritual well-being of even the most self-aware among us (and even the most "functional" of families.) In these difficult times, we can choose to make this holiday season about what is broken or the joy we can create. (See more tips at www.relaxintuit.com)

November & December Holiday Seasonal Soothers

1. Simplify. Make a Pre-Season To Do List *(Save a copy for next year. It gets easier each time, and you won't have to re-invent the wheel.)*
2. Create a timeline of when you'd like to get each task done to avoid last-minute pressure.
3. Take time early in the fall to browse catalogs and the web, plan crafts projects and address cards while you watch TV or chat with a friend.
4. Wrap-as-you-shop. Wrap with a friend over tea. Better yet, shop at stores that wrap for you!
5. Ask people on your list what they'd like. Surprises are wonderful too, but asking one another can make shopping so much easier, plus it's really fun to know you're getting them just what they really, really want.

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6. Let people help. If you have guests in, allowing them to bring part of the meal can actually make them feel more at home.
7. Swap babysitting with a friend to each get shopping done "hands-free." (*Bring home a little gift for the sitter.*)
8. Consider January sales. Wrap a photo or toy version in a fancy box with an I.O.U. (*Then, be sure to buy it.*)
9. Deck the Halls. Okay-- Deck one hall.
10. How could you simplify, or eliminate, just one task?
11. Read something that makes you think, feel or grow every single day.
12. Let a stranger go first in line at the market -- "just because."
13. Invite someone to join you for a holiday meal. If they offer to help, the correct answer is "Sure."
14. Do something you love every day.
15. Organize a girls (or guys) night-out.
16. Eat healthily and exercise. Then, when you splurge, enjoy every bite.
17. Missing a far-away loved one? Schedule an uninterrupted catch-up call.
18. Too *many* plans? Schedule naps, time to read, meditate or swim.
19. Too *few* plans? Invite friends, order-in. Use holiday paper plates. Rent a movie, play a board game. Have everybody bring a wrapped grab-bag gift under \$10.

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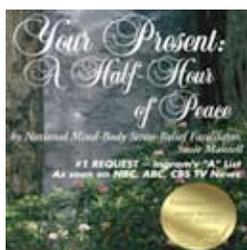
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20. Make tea dates. Just a few minutes with someone you really like is a terrific stress-buster when you're really busy.
21. Make at least one new friend this holiday season.
22. Take healthy breaks throughout your days.
23. Thank six people daily (*e.g. the mailman, cashiers, 1st responders, teachers*) .
24. If you find yourself alone at the holidays, plan a getaway, join a choral group, or donate your services.
25. On January 2nd, start a next-holiday savings account, and automatically transfer in a little bit in each week. Little by little, you will make next December so much easier.

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