

# Managing Holiday Stress

Here come the holidays! A time of "joy"? With holiday parties, quality time with family, and the smell of peppermint and pumpkin pie (yummy) comes a bit of stress. Whether it's financial, family related, logistical, cleaning, hosting or traveling, the stress is real and you may think..... I give up!

Most of us have likely learned how to muscle our way through the holidays, but it doesn't hurt to have a few more tips:

➤ **Create a Plan** – Taking on everything all at once is often completely overwhelming. Think about your to-do list like a recipe, break down what you need to do into manageable steps. Following these steps, will allow you to glide into your holiday plans much more smoothly.



➤ **Set priorities** – Shopping carts are deeper than the wallet. Have a realistic budget for your holidays and stick to it. Don't allow the festivities to blur what is important. Consider focusing on quality *time* vs spending *money*.

➤ **All things in moderation** – The overabundance of parties, gifts, food and alcohol during the holidays is something *SOME OF US* looks forward to. However, weight gain, debt, and possibly embarrassing behavior can often lead to stress that can find its way into the New Year.

➤ **Manage your expectations** – "Jolliness" and "Merriness" are mental states of thinking. Often times we *feel* like we *have to be* one way or another during the holidays which in turn affects our behavior and leads to disappointment when the feelings don't match our reality. Expectation management means understanding that the Holiday season is simply just that: Seasonal.

➤ **Don't try to be someone else's Hallmark movie** – In today's day and age, where we post our holidays on social media, the danger lies in comparing our Holidays with others. Who wouldn't love sipping on some Gluhwein (mulled wine) and munching on Stollen (bread with fruit) while walking down German Christmas Markets? However, at the end of the day, it's okay posting your reality... It does not make it any less special. Appreciate these moment and the people we share them with.

➤ **Stay connected** – It's vitally important to stay connected with each other as we enter this holiday season. Check on your Airman (*up and down the chain*) and their families to ensure no one feels alone. Don't forget about yourself. Self-care doesn't stop just because the holidays start. While we do A LOT of giving this time of year, take time to invest in you. You're worth it!



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