

HealthyBy Choice

...One Day at a Time

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Stress Management for this Holiday Season

Tips from the American Heart Association

If the holidays sometimes leave you feeling overwhelmed and out of control, you're not alone. And if the Grinch has stolen your spirit and good intentions, try some of these tips to reclaim your ho-ho-ho and stay happy and healthy.

Keep up healthy habits. Make a pact with yourself during the holidays. For example, decide that you'll move more and do something active every day over the next three weeks. Take it a step further, and pledge to start the day with a healthy breakfast, limit the sweets and get at least seven hours of sleep each night. If you don't completely give up your healthy habits, you won't feel like you have to start over once the holidays are over.

Beware of seasonal sweets. The holidays often dish up extra helpings of less-than-healthy treats. Try preparing healthy snacks that are ready to eat when the urge to snack strikes. If you're hosting a holiday party, challenge yourself to make delicious and healthier options using our recipes and cooking tips at <https://recipes.heart.org/en/>.

Stay active. Instead of beating yourself up about missing a workout, sprinkle some healthy activities into your daily routine. For example, if the weather isn't too frightful and you're working from home, ride your bike around your neighborhood during a lunch break. If dinner is going to be a feast, opt for a light lunch, then take a vigorous walk. And keep the family moving. When the kids are home from school, squeeze in some active chores and trips to the park.

But not too active. Give yourself the gift of peace. If you need some down time to recharge, declare a "me-treat" and do something that relaxes you. Try yoga, meditation or spending time in nature.

Make a plan for the new year. Your poinsettia's pooped and the gifts are all gone. Now what? It's a great time to reset for the new year – but don't go dashing through your to-do list too fast, or you might not stick to your plan. Lay out realistic, sustainable steps for the months ahead. For example, start a daily walking routine and sign up for a virtual Heart Walk before you set your sights on that marathon.



Plan to experience some
PEACE and JOY
this Holiday Season.



Self Care...Better Self.



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December is Safe Toys and Gifts Month

This holiday season (and beyond), please consider the following guidelines for choosing safe toys for all ages:

- ◆ Inspect all toys before purchasing. Avoid those that shoot or include parts that fly off. The toy should have no sharp edges or points and should be sturdy enough to withstand impact without breaking, being crushed, or being pulled apart easily.
- ◆ When purchasing toys for children with special needs try to: Choose toys that may appeal to different senses such as sound, movement, and texture; consider interactive toys to allow the child to play with others; and think about the size of the toy and the position a child would need to be in to play with it.
- ◆ Do NOT give toys with ropes and cords or heating elements.
- ◆ Do NOT give crayons and markers unless they are labeled “nontoxic”.
- ◆ Be diligent about inspecting toys your child has received. Check them for age, skill level, and developmental appropriateness before allowing them to be played with.
- ◆ Look for labels that assure you the toys have passed a safety inspection – “ATSM” means the toy has met the American Society for Testing and Materials standards.
- ◆ Gifts of sports equipment should always be accompanied by protective gear (give a helmet with the skateboard)
- ◆ Keep kids safe from lead in toys by: Educating yourself about lead exposure from toys, symptoms of lead poisoning, and what kinds of toys have been recalled; being aware that old toys may be more likely to contain lead in the paint; having your children wash their hands frequently and calling your doctor if you suspect your child has been exposed to lead. Consult the last two websites listed below for more information.
- ◆ Do NOT give toys with small parts (including magnets and “button” batteries which can cause serious injury or death if ingested) to young children as they tend to put things in their mouths, increasing the risk of choking. If the piece can fit inside a toilet paper roll, it is not appropriate for kids under age three.



Keep your holidays safe!

