[IMAGE]

Surviving the Holiday Crunch

By Editorial Staff

The joy of another holiday season brings with it an unintended, but wholly unhealthy complication: massive amounts of stress. Whether you're working overtime to finish out the year, navigating a hectic mall - or even the parking lot to get in and out of the mall - to find presents, coordinating multiple holiday trips to visit multiple relatives, or just dealing with multiple relatives in the first place, the holidays can pack on stress quickly. Celebrate the holidays this season instead of stressing your way through them by taking these simple de-stress strategies to heart:

Plan: If you want to feel as if you're running around with your head cut off during the holidays, jump headlong into things without a plan. Staying organized is the key to holiday sanity, whether you're mapping out a sequential shopping route to hit all the right stores (or choosing an even less-stressful route by ordering items online), scheduling family and friend get-togethers early (instead of the last minute, which can often lead to scheduling conflicts, not to mention hectic preparation), or taking the lead in deciding the who, what, when, where and why of the family dinner, planning and preparation can make your holiday season less stressful for you and everyone around you.

De-Stress - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark **Move:** You might think running around all day at the mall or dropping off presents for various friends / family members is great exercise, but it might add to your stress. Burning calories is one thing; enjoying a good workout away from the mad rush of the holiday season is another. This year, don't forget to schedule exercise into your busy schedule. It will help you stay in shape through a month of likely overindulgence, but more importantly, it will reduce stress. Particularly good stress-reducing exercises are walking or jogging, because generally, you're outside in your "own little world," far away from your worst stressors.

Breathe: The best advice for reducing stress over the holidays is actually great advice to take to heart all year round: breathe. When stress starts to surround you, take a deep breath and figure out how to "get away." Whether that's stopping holiday baking for a few minutes to sit down and relax in a quiet room; putting your shopping on hold and grabbing a bite to eat, away from the crush of fellow shoppers; or making an appointment at your local spa for a little "you time," it's important to slow down and de-stress or you'll

go crazy.

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