

[IMAGE]

## Don't Let the Holidays Wreck You

By Editorial Staff

The holiday season is supposed to be a happy, even relaxing one; but all too often, it deteriorates rapidly into chaos and stress, despite our best intentions. What can we do to preserve the positives that the holidays are supposed to deliver? It starts by developing a simple stress-reducing action plan to ensure the holidays don't wreck you. Here are three ways to get you on your merry way.

*1. Take a Deep Breath:* Not just physically, but relative to your entire state of mind. On the physical end, deep, slow, relaxed breathing reduces stress and blood pressure, bringing your entire body "down" from the manic high it might be on as you rush (mentally and physically) from gift list to gift list, party to party, store to store and more during the holiday season. On the state-of-mind end, slow your brain down; it will actually help you manage your holiday responsibilities more efficiently and effectively.

*2. December Still Counts:* One of the biggest stress multipliers over the holidays is our tendency to forget – or ignore – that December is just another month of the year. Why do so many of us turn the 12th month of the year into an unstructured, unplanned madness? Stick with the program. If you've been going to the gym four times a week for 48 weeks, don't quit now. If you've created a daily / weekly To-Do List for 11 months of the year, now's definitely not the time to discontinue it. Stay the course and thrive.

*3. Make Your Happiness:* It's true every other moment of the year and it's true now: not everything is going to go "right." Murphy's Law may apply more during the holiday season than any other time of year, but how you manage it is no different – make your own happiness. Fight through the long lines, hectic circumstances, less-than-favorite relatives, and anything else that could bring you down. What makes you happy? Keep it in mind every minute of every day of the year.

The holidays can easily wreck even the best of us ; but it doesn't have to if you keep these simple tips in mind. Take a deep breath, don't quit the plan, and make your own happiness – the recipe for a memorable holiday season ... and every day in between.

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