



BE HEALTHY.

LIFETM
FOR

Your Personal Energy Makeover Get Energized and Enjoy the Holidays in a Healthy Way

Article contributed by Dr. Eric Plasker, Marietta, GA

The holiday season is one of the most joyful times of the year, but it can also be the most exhausting. If you think of all the shopping, wrapping, decorating, cooking, cleaning, entertaining and traveling that occurs in the winter months, it's no wonder two-thirds of Americans often feel stressed and fatigued during the holidays (American Psychological Association, 2006). Give yourself the gift of a personal energy makeover this holiday season, and enjoy the holidays – and the rest of your life – in a healthier way.

Start Early, Set Boundaries

You will feel less stressed and the holidays will be more enjoyable if you begin preparing early. Decide which days you are going to take off of work and let your boss know ahead of time. Set a budget for holiday gifts, traveling expenses, decorations and the like – and stick to it! Create a deadline for having your holiday shopping and wrapping finished. Maintain a reasonable number of holiday parties you plan to attend, how many cookies you agree to make, and how many activities you intend to volunteer for. Do not be afraid to say “no,” and do not be afraid to ask for help. After all, it's your holiday, too.

Take Time for Yourself and Exercise

Shopping alone in your tennis shoes does not count! Choose a fun exercise that doesn't include surfing the Web or sitting on the couch. Go for a walk with neighbors or take up a new sport, like skiing. Meditate, read outside with a blanket and cup of hot cocoa, pray, practice yoga or Pilates; maybe even join a Christmas Choir. Try to spend plenty of quality time with your family and friends, but above all, make sure that to get six to eight restful hours of sleep each night.

Eat High-Energy Foods

In order to have a lot of energy during the holidays, you must maintain a healthy, balanced diet. High-energy foods are found in whole grains, fresh fruits and vegetables, lean meats, fish, poultry, tofu, edamame, flaxseed oil and high-quality vitamin and mineral supplements. It's okay to indulge in holiday treats such as cookies and eggnog once in a while; after all, food and drink are among the greatest pleasures in life. You deserve to enjoy them – just be sure to enjoy them from a place of appreciation, respect and balance.

Maintain High-Energy Thoughts and Activities

Thinking and acting positively throughout the day is vital to your success in maintaining a more energetic lifestyle during the holiday season. Accept your current situation and circumstances, and know that you can choose your lifestyle patterns at any time. You *can* gain energy during the holidays. Make a fresh start every day, and have faith that everything will work out. The challenges you will inevitably face during this season will teach you positive lessons about what's important in life.

Remember What the Holiday Season is All About

It's easy to get caught up in the shopping, wrapping, cleaning, cooking and other chores that encompass the holiday season, but what do the holidays really mean to you? Is the season a time to relax and spend time with your friends and family? Is it a spiritual vacation? Is it a time of worship, giving, love, faith, gratitude or peace? Whatever it is, once you remember the reason you're celebrating, you will feel less stressed and more energized during this often-stressful time.

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