

How to de-stress the holidays

The holidays ought to revolve around inner reflections and family togetherness. They should be seen as a time when we can relax our bodies, calm our minds, and refresh our spirits. But, society would rather have us focus on the other things. And, instead of encouraging us to do less, it begs us to do more.

This year can be different, though. This year you can decide to take charge of what's important during the holidays. Here are some ideas for a happy, sane holiday season:

- Make a list of your holiday traditions. Keep the ones you enjoy and find relaxing. Discard most of the rest.
- Avoid gift-giving frenzies. Talk to your family about establishing a new tradition for this year's gift exchange. Consider new options, such as only giving gifts to the children or having adults pick names out of a hat.
- Develop a shopping plan:
 - 1) Set a budget.
 - 2) Make a list of gift ideas.
 - 3) Shop during off hours (best: mornings; worst: Saturday afternoon).
- Remember, it's the efforts of many people that make the holidays meaningful. You are not solely responsible for making things perfect for everyone.
- You don't have to accept every invitation you receive. Practice saying "No" graciously.

Independence Blue Cross members can find more tools to manage stress at www.ibx.com or by ordering a **"From Stress to Success"** stress management package on www.ibxpress.com.

We're here for you every step of the way.

