

Coping with Holiday Stress

Monthly Newsletter

December, 2013

Four Ways to Deal with Stress

It's that time of year again, a time to gather with friends and family, share in moments of laughter and joy and savor making special memories. Along with all the wonderful holiday moments, are pressure, stress and anxiety. When you find yourself feeling out of balance and drained, try these four simple techniques for managing stress.

- 1. Positive Self-Talk.** One approach to coping with stress is self-talk. We all talk to ourselves; sometimes we talk out loud, but usually we keep self-talk in our heads. Self-talk can be positive ("I can do this") or negative ("I'm so stupid").



Negative self-talk increases stress while positive self-talk reinforces the sense of calmness and control. With practice, you can learn to turn negative thoughts into positive ones. For example:

Negative

Positive

"I can't do this."

"I'll do the best I can."

"Everything is going wrong."

"I can handle things if I go one step at a time."

"I hate it when this happens."

"I know how to deal with this; I've done it before."

To help you feel better, practice positive self-talk every day—in the car, at your desk, before you go to bed or whenever you notice negative thoughts.

Need some help getting started? Try positive statements such as these:

- "I can get help if I need it."
- "We can work it out."
- "I won't let this problem get me down."
- "Things could be worse."
- "I'm human, and we all make mistakes."
- "Someday I'll laugh about this."
- "I can deal with this situation when I feel better."

- 2. Emergency Stress Stoppers.** There are many stressful situations—at work, at home, on the road and in public places. We may feel stress because of poor communication, too much work and everyday hassles like standing in line, but emergency stress stoppers help you deal with stress on the spot.

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Here are some examples of stress stoppers. Keep in mind that different situations may require different strategies or approaches, so combining these techniques may also be helpful.

- Count to 10 before you speak
- Take three to five deep breaths
- Walk away from the stressful situation, and say you'll handle it later
- Go for a walk
- Don't be afraid to say "I'm sorry" if you made a mistake
- Set your watch 5 to 10 minutes ahead to avoid the stress of being late
- Break down big problems into smaller parts. For example, answer one letter or phone call per day, instead of dealing with everyone at once
- Drive in the slow lane or avoid busy roads to help you stay calm while driving
- Smell a rose, hug a loved one or smile at your neighbor

3. Finding Pleasure. When stress makes you feel bad, do something that makes you feel good! Doing things that you enjoy is a natural way to fight stress.

You don't have to do a lot to find pleasure. Even if you are ill or down, you can find pleasure in the simple things, such as chatting with a friend or reading a good book. Try to do at least one thing every day that you enjoy, even if you can only find 15 minutes.

- Start an art project
- Take up a hobby, new or old
- Read a favorite book, short story, magazine or newspaper
- Have coffee or a meal with friends
- Sew, knit or crochet
- Listen to music during or after you practice relaxation
- Take a nature walk
- Make a list of everything you still want to do in life
- Watch an old movie on TV or rent a video
- Experiment by cooking or baking a new healthy recipe
- Play cards or board games with family and friends

4. Daily Relaxation. Relaxation is more than sitting in your favorite chair watching TV. To relieve stress, relaxation should calm the tension in your mind and body. Some good forms of relaxation are yoga, tai chi and meditation.

Like most skills, relaxation takes practice. Many people join a class to learn and practice relaxation skills. Deep breathing is a form of relaxation you can learn and practice at home. Next time you feel a stressful situation coming on try using the following steps to help you distress and refocus.

1. Sit in a comfortable position with your feet on the floor and your hands in your lap or lie down. Close your eyes
2. Picture yourself in a peaceful place. Perhaps you're lying on the beach, walking in the mountains or floating in the clouds. Hold this scene in your mind
3. Inhale and exhale. Focus on breathing slowly and deeply
4. Continue to breathe slowly for 10 minutes or more
5. Try to take at least 5 to 10 minutes every day for deep breathing or another form of relaxation

Holiday Roast

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Glazed Ham with Blackberry Sauce

Preparation

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees
2. To prepare ham, combine 2 tablespoons mustard, sugar, 2/3 cup jam and pepper in a small bowl; spread half of jam mixture over ham. Place ham on broiler pan coated with cooking spray; insert a thermometer into thickest portion of ham. Bake at 350 degrees for 2.5 hours or until thermometer registers 160 degrees, basting with remaining jam mixture occasionally.
3. To prepare the sauce, combine the cider and wine in a small saucepan over medium heat; bring to a boil. Stir in 1 cup jam and 1 tablespoon mustard. Reduce heat to low, and cook until jam dissolves, stirring frequently. Remove from heat, and stir in juice. Serve with ham.

Prep: 20 minutes

Cook: 2.5 hours

Yields: 16 servings plus leftovers



Ingredients

Ham

- 1 (8- to 9-pound) smoked, bone-in ham shank, trimmed
- 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 2/3 cup seedless blackberry jam
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- Cooking spray

Sauce

- 1 cup apple cider
- 1/2 cup dry white wine
- 1 cup seedless blackberry jam
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice

Nutritional Information

Calories:	337
Fat:	12 g
Saturated Fat:	4 g
Monounsaturated Fat:	6 g
Polyunsaturated Fat:	1 g
Protein:	31 g
Carbohydrate:	25 g
Fiber:	0 g
Cholesterol:	100 mg
Sodium:	143 mg
Calcium:	14 mg

Source: *Health.com*