

stress free christmas



The holidays in December are the most wonderful time of year for many but for some, it can be a very stressful and difficult time. How can you avoid stress at Christmas? Is it even possible?

Christmas parties, Santa photos, decorating, baking, endless trips to the stores and making sure everyone has a gift under the tree. It can be overwhelming!!!

Write down all the things that need to be done and when it needs to be done. Include a menu plan for Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and the following days. Write down who to give presents to and what gifts are in mind. Go through your decorations and wrapping supplies to see what will be needed, Christmas cards, wrapping paper, tags, etc.

A little extra organized will make the holidays that much easier. Write out lists of things to do, then cross off the tasks that are neither urgent nor essential. Look at what's left and see what could be delegated. Give someone responsibility for buying and putting up decorations. The 'to do' list will instantly shrink. Gift-buying is one of the most stressful aspects of Christmas. Avoid the crazy malls during the holiday rush by shopping online from the comfort of your own home or anywhere really! There are a lot of great deals out there already-get ordering and having presents delivered to your front door. If you must go shopping, don't ever go on the weekends. Try to get out first thing in the morning and see what can accomplish before the madness begins. There is nothing more tedious than spending hours upon hours fighting with tissue paper and tape and trying to figure out how to wrap those awkward toys and round packages. Wrap while you go and there won't be added stress on Christmas Eve (and if the little ones find Santa's stash before the big night, they will still be surprised!). Or skip the beautiful wrapping and just head over to the local dollar store and buy a bunch of

bags. Save yourself hours of wrapping and paper. If you have a big family, stop the \$10 gifts for every aunt and cousin on the never-ending list. Maybe set a budget of \$50 or \$100 for one gift for the whole family. Decide now when to stop preparing and start enjoying. Christmas Eve is a good time to put up your feet and admire your handiwork. If working towards a goal, you are more likely to stick to it. Don't forget to schedule in some downtime for yourself to relax and enjoy the holiday season. Think of 10-minute escape plans-just a few minutes away from a stressful situation is enough time to regroup, go for a walk, take a hot bath, try deep breathing, call a friend, play some relaxing, calming music. Do you remember what you got for Christmas two years ago? Probably not. But cherish the memories that have been spent with family and friends forever or create new ones. So give the best present of all and arrange to do something a bit out of the ordinary. Get up early to see the sun rise, try flying a kite, have the kids play dress-up, or get a friend to dress up as Santa Claus for a short visit. This will raise everyone's endorphin levels and they will still be talking about it next year.