

Stay
Healthy
for the
HOLIDAYS





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Holiday State of Mind

Not everyone has a joyful, happy holiday. The stress of parties, gift-buying, travel, family and expectations can trigger or exacerbate mental health conditions. Here are some ways to keep yourself centered this holiday season.

SET REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

Don't paint Norman Rockwell holiday scenes in your head, and especially avoid comparing yourself to other family members, advises the National Alliance on Mental Illness. Instead, adjust your expectations and try to focus on positive accomplishments and experiences.

HERE COMES THE SUN

Make sure to make time to soak up

some rays, especially if you're prone to seasonal changes in mood. Even indoor lighting, like fluorescent lights, can help. Punch up your exposure by taking a quick walk outside on a sunny day.

STAY AWAY FROM THE DRINKS

Alcohol is a depressant, and while it may be tempting to reach for a drink to relax at a party or after a stressful day, don't do it. NAMI reports a 20 percent overlap between people with anxiety or

mood disorders and substance use, even though alcohol and drugs can exacerbate their symptoms.

SEE YOUR THERAPIST

If you're in therapy, stay there. With a busy holiday schedule, it can be difficult to keep appointments. But make your therapist a priority. The holidays, with travel, family and more, can bring up a lot of emotions. Make sure that you're coping with them in a healthy way.

Keep up with your medications, too, and make sure you get any prescriptions filled before you hit the road.

REST UP

Yeah, we know. Busy. But try hard to stick to your regular sleep schedule and routines. If your batteries are running low, don't be afraid to take a day and recharge. However, don't isolate yourself. Spend plenty of time with supportive, caring people.

Quick Holiday Workouts



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Time is short during the holiday season, but that's no excuse to skip out on working out. Try some of these tips to squeeze in some exercise.

USE INTERVALS

Interval training alternates between different exercises, usually with varying degrees of effort, speed or strength. This alternation between more-intense and less-intense workouts can bring big benefits. The Mayo Clinic says interval training can burn

more calories, improve your aerobic capacity and can be done without special equipment. As with any workout, make sure to warm up and stretch before and after you exercise.

BODYWEIGHT EXERCISES

Bodyweight exercises are much what they sound like. They use the body's natural weight to build strength in muscle groups. No special equipment or extra weights are needed. An example of a bodyweight exercise is a chin-up, sit-up or a push-up. However, you can also do twists, squats and balance exercises. Start out with two sets of 10 reps and only increase the sets or reps when it

becomes easy.

GOING FOR A WALK

Look at your holiday errands and see if you can walk to any shops or stores you plan to visit. If you have to drive, park as far from the store as possible. Skip the elevators and take the stairs. When you have a break at work, take a stroll around the neighborhood, to a different floor, or maybe even just around the parking lot. Anything to get your step count (and your energy levels) up.

DON'T IGNORE THE CORE

Getting your arms and legs moving is easy, but keep a care for your core

muscles, too. Your core muscles are in your torso and help with balance, posture and strength. Some exercises to help your core are planks (balance your weight on your toes and forearms and hold the position), kneeling extensions (on your hands and knees, extend one leg and the opposite arm out and hold for a count of 10), and chair crunches (on your back, place your lower legs on a chair and your hands behind your head, then slowly curl upwards).

If you're not used to exercising, build up slowly. In time, you may find that regular exercise not only gets you in better shape, but helps you deal with holiday stress.

Holiday Mindfulness

Mindfulness comes from Buddhist meditation and means keeping a moment-by-moment awareness of your thoughts, feelings, sensations and environment through a gentle, nurturing lens.

Sound complicated? It isn't. Keep reading.

ACCEPTANCE

Practicing mindfulness also means practicing acceptance, says the Greater Good Science Center at the University of California, Berkeley.

Pay attention to your thoughts and feelings without judging them; in these moments, there is no right or wrong way to feel. During mindfulness, your thoughts should tune in to the present moment rather than turning to past events or imagining the future.

IT DOES A BODY GOOD

According to the center, practicing mindfulness can improve sleep and feelings of depression, help you cope with stress, helps the mind focus and increases compassion. It may even help you eat less and improve your immune system.

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Here are some ways to practice mindfulness from the Greater Good Science Center. During these exercises, pay attention to your breathing, especially when you're feeling a strong emotion. Also, pay

attention to all your senses in the moment. Recognize your thoughts and emotions to not define you.

Mindful breathing: Take slow, even breaths in and out. Pay attention to the physical sensations of the breath as it

flows in and out.

Body scan: Pay attention to each part of your body in turn, from head to toe.

Walking meditation: Focus the movement of your feet as you take a path 10 paces long, back and forth. Feel your feet

touching and leaving the ground.

Loving-kindness meditation: Extend compassion toward people, starting with yourself, then someone close to you, an acquaintance, and so on, until you get to all beings.



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Everything in Moderation

So much of the holiday season involves excess. Rich foods, parties with rounds of drinks, stress-fueled cookie binges (that's everyone else too, right?). But for healthy living, a path of moderation is best. Here are some tips for keeping your appetites under control.

GET ON TRACK

To control how much you're eating and drinking, it's important to understand just how much you're eating and drinking. Track your food and drink, whether it's in a notebook or by an app on your phone. This will allow you to see just how many calories you're consuming and when you're consuming it. It may surprise you, for instance, at how many calories you drink. It'll make it easier for you to see where you need to cut.

TAG A BUDDY

Ask a friend to help you keep an eye on your consumption, especially when you're out at holiday parties. Hold each other accountable and help each other make more healthful choices while you're making the holiday rounds.

FAKE IT, DON'T TAKE IT

If you're feeling pressured to drink at a holiday party, start ordering drinks that look like alcoholic beverages, but aren't. A soda with a twist of lime looks awfully like a whole handful of vodka drinks, but is just good ol' H2O. You can also order soft drinks or juice, both of which are pretty common mixers, but ask the bartender to hold the booze.



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When it comes to food, give yourself permission to indulge, but only take the foods you really love and leave the rest. If you're pres-

sured to just try a little, remember it adds up. Practice telling people (maybe that pushy aunt who always has a new gelled salad recipe) no.

PLAN, PLAN, PLAN

If you know you're going to an event where there's likely to be a lot of food or a big meal, plan accordingly. Take

smaller portions for the rest of your meals that day. Plan an extra workout. Stay hydrated to help fight bloating from extra salt and sugar.

Recovering from a Hangover

Forget the hair of the dog. Instead, try these tips from Harvard Health for getting rid of a holiday hangover.

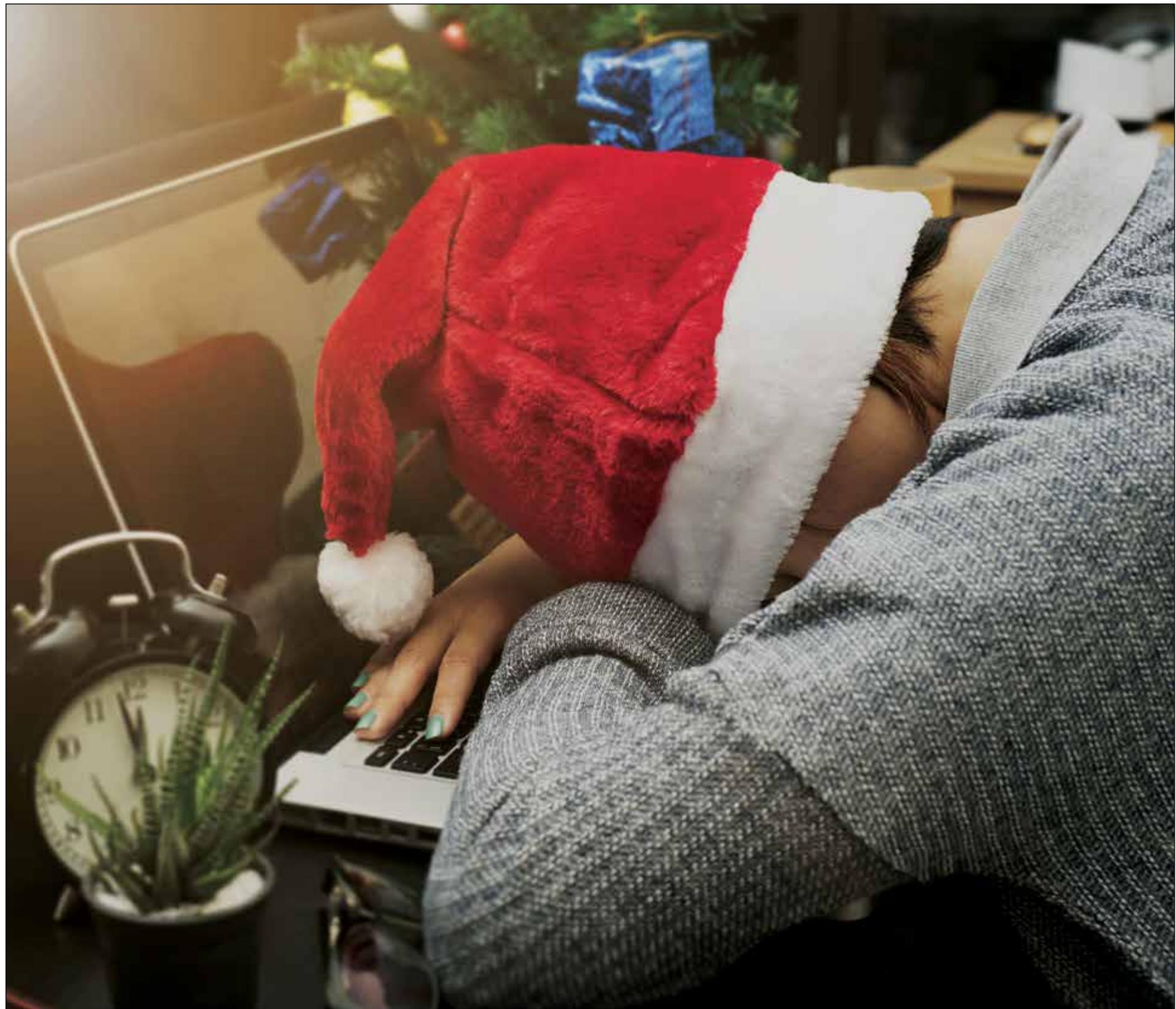
1. Drink, but not that. Grab some water and keep grabbing it all day, especially if your hangover comes with vomiting, diarrhea, nausea and sweating. Alcohol can cause excess urination and all of those other things cause you to lose more water than normal, anyway.

2. Carb up. Once you think you can keep something down, reach for the carbohydrates. Drinking may drop your blood sugar, which can cause fatigue and headaches. Dry toast is a great way to recuperate. Stay away from greasy or fatty foods, at least until your stomach settles. If you can't manage to eat, try some sips of juice.

3. Take a pain reliever. Stay away from Tylenol, though, as any lingering alcohol can enhance the drug's toxic effects. Instead, grab aspirin, ibuprofen or other nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs. Take it with your toast to minimize stomach irritation.

4. Drink caffeinated coffee or tea. It will help with the grogginess that comes with a hangover, but, as a diuretic, it may exacerbate dehydration. Another reason to keep the water flowing.

5. What not to do. Don't go with the hair of the dog that bit



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you. While some studies show that it may indeed help if the hangover is part of an alcohol withdrawal, it's better to reach

for water. More booze perpetuates the cycle. Other natural remedies, like artichoke extract or vitamin B6, haven't been

shown to work definitively.

Lastly, try not to judge yourself too harshly for overindulgence.

Just remember not to drink and drive so that the only miserable person in the morning is yourself.

Out in the Cold

When the weather outside is frightful, it can be easy to take a pass on your outdoor workout. But don't do that! Keeping as close to your routine as possible is important to staying healthy and managing stress levels during the holiday season. Luckily, there's plenty of gear out there to make a winter workout more pleasant.

LAYER UP

Dress in layers before going out, the Mayo Clinic says. Dressing too warmly for the type of exercise you'll be doing is a mistake, as is not wearing enough clothes to guard against frostbite and hypothermia. Layers are the answer. As you exercise and start to sweat, strip off layers. As you cool down, put them back on as needed.

The Mayo Clinic says to start with a layer of thin, synthetic material to wick sweat away from your body. Next, add fleece or wool for insulation, and, finally, a water-proof, breathable outer layer.

PROTECT HANDS, FEET AND FACE

Cold temps draw blood (and warmth) to your body's core, leaving your hands, head and feet open to frostbite. Wear glove liners made of wicking fabric under heavier gloves or mittens for the best protection, the Mayo Clinic advises. Remove the outer layer when you get sweaty.

For your feet, buy training shoes a half size or a size larger to allow for extra socks. Use a hat or headband for protect your ears. If it's super cold outside, wear a scarf or a ski mask to protect your nose and face.



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WARM WEATHER TIPS THAT AREN'T

We usually talk about drinking plenty of water and wearing sunscreen during the summer, but these are

important tips for the winter, too. Sweating while you're working out combined with the drying power of winter's wind can make you dehydrated just as easily as summer's

beating sun.

And it's easy to get sunburned in winter, too, especially if you're exercising in the snow or at altitude. Make sure your sunscreen blocks

UVA and UVB rays and that your lip balm has a sunscreen, too. If you're in a snowy area, protect your eyes from snow and ice glare with dark glasses or goggles.

Health-Conscious Gifts

If your holiday list is full of health nuts, we've got the perfect list of gift ideas for you. Keep reading for ways to wrap up the perfect presents this year.

HEALTHY COOKBOOKS

Name the diet and there's probably a cookbook for it. Pay a visit to your local bookstore to put your hands on some copies. Flip through to make sure the recipes will be appealing to your friend or family member, then pay attention to the details. Are the recipes formatted in a way that's easy to understand? Do they call for unusual ingredients that might be hard to find? Are the instructions clear and easily understood? If

you're not a cook or are unfamiliar, don't be afraid to ask the experts at the store.

WATER BOTTLES

Help your loved one stay stylishly hydrated with a snazzy new water bottle. Water bottles come a variety of styles, colors and materials. Look for a bottle with the measurements clearly indicated on the side and that's made from a durable material. Also look for clips or straps that would allow someone to carry it hands-free. Pay attention to the mouth of the bottle, too, and make sure that it's easy to fill.

TRAINING JOURNAL

Motivate someone to stay on track with their fitness in the new year with a training journal and some fun pens. A training journal can be as simple as a

plain notebook or as fancy as a journal specially made for the job. Look for one with a meaningful or motivational statement to help them hit their goals.

BAGS AWAY

Bags, bags and more bags. Snag a tote to hold a change of clothes, a tiny bag to hold phone and keys during a yoga class or during a run. Or how about an insulated lunch bag or tote with bento boxes for that healthful lunch? Look to the local sporting goods store for a wide selection of bags for any fitness enthusiast and any situation. Consider adding a personal touch with a monogram or embroidering their name on the bag. And never give a bag empty; buy a handful of inexpensive accessories to go in it for a complete gift that doesn't even have to be wrapped.