
HOLIDAY STRESS MANAGEMENT

The holidays often mean increased stress and pressure. These stressors come from many directions (schedules, relationships, finances, extra expectations, etc.)

Here are some “grab and go” ideas to help you manage the stress and pressure of the season.

These are designed to be simple actions or tips that you can easily adjust and adapt to your situations.

RELEASING JOY

Take time for a joyful activity. When we engage in joy, endorphins are released from our brain which boost our sense of well-being. When we engage in joy, we will find our mind becoming clearer with a better ability to focus. Moments to enjoy: **moments of beauty** (a sunrise, a painting); **moments of humor** (finding jokes, funny videos, etc.); **moments of connection** (call a friend, meet someone for coffee); **moments of quietness** (journaling, reading, listening to music); **moments of gratitude** (counting your blessings).

MINI RELAXATION—DEEP BREATHING

As you inhale, count very slowly up to four; as you exhale, count slowly back down to one. As you inhale, you say to yourself "one, two, three, four," as you exhale, you say to yourself "four, three, two, one." Do this several times.

STRESS BUSTER STRETCH

Stretching helps to release tension and give us a sense of relaxation. This is an easy stretch to use in the holiday season.

Lower Back Stretch: • Sit in a chair with your knees apart. • Slowly bend forward and reach between your legs. • Hold the stretch. • Return to the sitting position and repeat.

RELAXATION ON ONE HAND

The following activity is a way for you to relax any time you feel stress or tension. It is a self-guided imagery exercise that you can use to focus on positive thoughts and images. Start with slower deep breaths to relax. Then use one hand to touch each finger on the other hand. As you touch one finger at a time, you will focus on the thoughts assigned to that finger. You can close your eyes or not. Do what is comfortable for you. Take about 10 to 15 minutes to complete.

- **Touch your Thumb:** Imagine a beautiful and peaceful place you find relaxing
- **Touch your Index Finger:** Imagine a positive interaction with another person.
- **Touch your Middle Finger:** Imagine a physical activity where you felt energy and joy.
- **Touch your Ring Finger:** Imagine yourself floating in space. You are fully relaxed.
- **Touch your Pinky Finger:** Imagine something that is fun. Imagine something that makes you laugh.

