

# REDUCING HOLIDAY STRESS

Has stress taken the fun out of your holidays?

**Put the “jolly” back in your holidays and create cherished holiday memories with these proven strategies.**

- \* Acknowledge that everything doesn't need to be perfect
- \* Start holiday planning and preparations earlier
- \* Simplify wherever you can when planning and holding festive celebrations
- \* Stick to your budget
- \* Scale down your holiday plans
- \* Ponder what you really want to do to celebrate the holidays
- \* Talk with family members and friends about what they want to do
- \* Plan celebrations that express what the holidays truly mean for you
- \* Identify old family traditions. Which ones do you love?
- \* Opt to keep holiday traditions that bring you joy and happiness
- \* Give yourself permission to let go of old traditions that you aren't fond of
- \* Establish start and stop times for parties
- \* Take shortcuts like buying pre-made pies to save time
- \* Examine options for pre-made meals or catering services
- \* Promptly ask for help when you need it
- \* Keep the kids busy with holiday crafts. They'll enjoy it and you can get more done.
- \* Take time daily to meditate, even if only for a few minutes
- \* Inform all prospective attendees of your holiday plans in advance
- \* Discuss challenging issues in advance with a person who tends to create tension
- \* Use place cards to assign seating in efforts to avoid tension-filled holiday gatherings
- \* Short-circuit disagreeable family discussions by interrupting or changing the subject
- \* Make a gift list, considering the amount of money you can comfortably spend
- \* Cut down your gift list
- \* Shop early and make notes about where to get low-cost gifts
- \* Ask for gift suggestions from the people on your gift list

- \* Consider giving gift cards to save time and precious energy
- \* Suggest a family name-drawing to reduce gift expenditures
- \* Reduce the amount of money you spend overall for the holidays and per gift
- \* Avoid making credit card purchases at holiday time
- \* Think about making homemade food gifts to save dollars at holiday time
- \* Shop early and place gifts in a gift drawer so you'll be ready for the holidays
- \* Schedule time to be with your kids for some special holiday moments

### **Stress-Free Holiday Traveling**

- \* Plan holiday travel itineraries in advance
- \* Travel during off-peak hours
- \* Start out well rested
- \* Build in extra money to your travel budget in case of emergencies
- \* Arrive at the airport or other station early to more easily take care of last minute challenges
- \* Expect to run into snags
- \* Pack light and carry on your bag, rather than checking it
- \* Allow extra time to travel from place to place and expect heavy traffic
- \* Send your gifts in advance or take gift cards

- \* Limit alcohol and caffeine
- \* Pack plenty of healthy snacks that travel well without refrigeration
- \* Bring plenty of things to keep the kids happily occupied
- \* Make waiting times go faster and regain a happy holiday feeling by meditating
- \* Use portable meditation props, like a favorite image on your smart phone or tablet
- \* Plan to arrive at your holiday destination rested and excited to share your holidays with loved ones

### **Meditation for Holiday Travel**

- \* Sit up straight and relax your shoulders
- \* Let distracting thoughts dissolve away as you focus on deep breathing
- \* Think about your destination and the loved ones you'll be visiting
- \* Remember that you're surrounded by people making similar plans – just like you
- \* Once you're feeling relaxed and happy, let go of the details and enjoy that warm feeling
- \* Imagine wrapping up those good feelings and presenting them to everyone around you
- \* Gradually return your attention to the present moment
- \* Remind yourself of the fellowship you felt while meditating