

F O C U S

Vista Psychological & Counseling Centre

Staying Healthy During the Holidays

We're told that the holiday season is the "best time of year." However, it can also be quite stressful. Planning events and gifts can be a big chore. Also, the pressure for things to live up to expectations can leave some people feeling blue. Here are myStrength, Inc.'s top tips for staying positive and calm during the holidays. Remember: Your health matters! Taking care of yourself is not selfish—it gives you the energy to be a loving, healthy friend and family member.

How to Care for Your Body and Mind:

- Get enough sleep.
- Treating yourself to yummy foods is one of life's pleasures. Remember to eat slowly and savor every bite. Try putting down your fork between bites.
- Try to choose healthy foods between rich holiday meals. Healthy meals will help you feel better and more energetic.
- Take vitamins. Add a stress complex tablet if this makes you feel better.
- Drink water! Avoid lots of caffeine, especially near the end of the day.
- While they may relax you in the short term, know that alcohol, cigarettes, and other drugs generally increase stress.
- Make room for regular exercise in your schedule.
- Make time for yourself. Take a moment each day to do something you enjoy.

Tips for Holiday Planning:

- Evaluate our traditions each year. Are they still important to you and your family? Keep your

favorites and let go of the stressful ones.

- Consider cutting out the parts of the holidays that you really dislike.
- Include someone who is alone, lonely, or in need on the holiday.
- Plan ahead and delegate as much as possible.
- Treat yourself to things you enjoy.
- Express your feelings to a trusted friend or counselor.
- Connect with a friend or family member you enjoy spending time with.
- Volunteer with friends or family. Helping others in need can help put things in perspective.
- When stress feels overwhelming, take a break stop what you are doing and go to another room or take a walk around the block.

When a Loved One Has an Illness:

- Have a plan for situations that might arise such as a panic attack, seizure, or flash-back.
- Accept and share feelings about the holidays.
- Avoid expectations. Instead, take each moment as it presents itself.



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- Respect and support each person's choice for joining in family activities.
- Be flexible. Accept when plans change.
- Understand that other people's experiences are not in your control. You can't fix everything. You can't make the holiday perfect.
- Write a personal or group "gratitude list" to refocus on the good things this season.

Source: myStrength, Inc.

Eating Well May Slow Hearing Loss in Women

Many people lose some their hearing as they get older. Experts say that, of those over the age of 75, about half have hearing loss. Not being able to hear well can make it hard to communicate. That can affect relationships with loved ones friends, and coworkers. A new study shows that women who have a pattern of healthy eating have a lower risk of hearing loss than women who don't eat well. A healthy eating pattern includes lots of vegetables, fruits, and whole grains. It limits sugar, salt, and animal fat. The study took place between 1991 and 2013. Women taking part in the study were all professional nurses. Every 4. Years, the researchers asked the women to recall what they had eaten over the past year. About 71,000 women responded to the questionnaires. The research team also asked the women whether they had noticed a hearing problem. During the study more than 2000 women said they had developed moderate or worse hearing loss. The team used the reports of food intake to group the women by diet patterns. They compared women with the healthiest pattern to those with the least healthy pattern. The women with the healthiest diet pattern were less likely to have a hearing problem. "Interestingly, we observed that those following an overall healthy diet had a lower risk of moderate or worse hearing loss," says researcher Dr. Sharon G. Curtain at Brigham and Women's Hospital. "Eating well contributes to overall good health, and it may also be helpful in reducing the risk of hearing loss." Because the study included only women, more research is needed to see whether the results also apply to men.

Source: newsinhealth/nih.gov/2018/07

Discover Herbal Products

Are you thinking of trying an herb to improve your health? Find out about the uses, effectiveness, and possible side effects of herbal products before you try them. News In Health's (NIH) new app "HerbList," has the herb info your need in an on-the-go package. Use the app to explore what the science says about over 50 common herbs and herbal products. It features an alphabetical list of herbs with a picture of the plant next to each name. Click on an herb to lean specific facts about it. You'll find background knowledge, safety problems like drug interactions that may arise, side effects and links to more information. You can also save your favorite herbs for easy recall or offline access. There are many popular herbs and herbal supplements to explore, like aloe, chamomile, ginger, and turmeric. HerbList is available to download to your phone or tablet from the Apple App Store or Google Play.

Visit nccih.nih.gov/health/herblistapp for the links.

Tips for Taming Caregiver Stress

Caring for others fulfills a basic social contract in ways that can draw generations and individuals closer. Certainly, caring for an elderly parent, ailing spouse or partner is a worthy, often satisfying pursuit. But it isn't easy. If you're among the estimated 66 million Americans acting as caregivers for friends, family, or neighbors you may often wrestle with stress as well as exhaustion, anger, guilt, grief, and other emotions. Two-thirds of these caregivers are women. The task is especially hard on women on the so-called sandwich generation, who are simultaneously caring for children and older parents, quite possibly while working outside the home too. While you attend to the needs of others, your own sense of well-being may head south. Studies of men and women responsible for the long-term care of relative show higher rates of illness, suppressed immune response, slower healing, and even earlier death among caregivers. Additionally, research reveals that ongoing stress endured by older adults caring for spouses with Alzheimer's disease has a negative impact on the caregiver's own mental functioning. In order to give care to others, you need stress relief, support, and time for yourself and your family. Here are some tips:

- Relaxation response techniques and nurturing techniques are vital. Practicing them often will enable you to feel calmer, happier, and better able to help others. If it's too hard to find the time, consider getting extra help with some household tasks. The Elder Locator at www.eldercare.gov can help you find varied services for older adults and their families; it's run by the Administration on Aging. The Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregiving, at www.rosalynncarter.org, also provides recommendations for evidence-based caregiver support programs.
- Protect your own health. Research suggests that a caregiver's immune function is often suppressed by the stress of caring for others. Boost your resistance by eating well, getting enough rest and exercise, and pursuing activities that bring you pleasure. Take advantage of regular respite care from professionals, family, and friends to give you much needed breaks.
- Join a support group to talk out frustrations with other people in your situation and to get helpful ideas. Some caregiver support groups are available online (such as a nationwide chat group run by AARP; for a quick link to it, go to www.health.harvard.edu/cgteam). Others are run by local hospitals, senior centers, and community groups.
- A blend of assertiveness and cognitive restructuring skills can help you share the work, instead of taking on everything yourself. Spell out to other family members what needs to be done and what sort of help would be best. If no one offers help, ask for it. Lining those who can lend a hand has gotten much easier with new websites and apps that help friends, family, and communities coordinate care. Another example of a helpful site is CaringBridge (www.caringbridge.org).
- When someone offers help, accept. Keep handy a list of small tasks people can do, such as calling regularly, cooking an occasional dinner, shopping, and running errands. You can dole out tasks or ask people to check off what they can do.
- Accept that circumstances change quickly. Periodically reassess what you can offer and what assistance you need. If it's getting too hard to fulfill certain needs, ask family members for help or consider other options, such as hiring paid caregivers to take on these tasks. Consult a geriatric care manager (www.aginglifecare.org) or social worker for help; your local council on aging or visiting nurse association should be able to help you find one. If necessary, consider another living arrangement that would help you meet your needs and those of our loved one.
- Accentuate your spiritual connectedness to something greater than yourself, be it to God, community, or the natural world.
- Remember that you're doing this not solely out of obligation. Focusing on the love you hold for your loved one can help dial back stress when things become frustrating and overwhelming.

Source: Healthbeat, Harvard Medical School, www.health.harvard.edu

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Welcome to Vista!!!

We offer the very best in psychological and counseling services.

Established in 2008, our staff is committed to helping you achieve greater emotional wellness and adjustment through individual, child/adolescent, couples, family, and group therapy.

We are available to you Monday thru Saturday with day and evening hours for your

Gaining Perspective on an Argument

TIME REQUIRED

15 minutes, several times a year for the formal practice. You can use perspective-taking skills whenever conflict arises with your partner.

HOW TO DO IT

It's easy to get wrapped up in our own heads when we argue with our partners. This exercise will help you gain some perspective on your feelings during conflict.

Think about a major disagreement you had with your partner in the past four months, and how much distress it's still causing you. Then, follow these steps:

- Think about this disagreement with your partner from the perspective of a neutral third party who wants the best for all involved, a person who sees things from a neutral point of view. How might this person think about the disagreement? How would he or she view your partner's behaviors and perspective? How might he or she find the good that could come from it? (5 minutes)
- Some people find it helpful to take this third-party perspective during their interactions with their romantic partner. However, almost everybody finds it challenging to take this third-party perspective at all times. In your relationship with your partner, what obstacles do you face in trying to take this third-party perspective, especially when you're having a disagreement? What might help you overcome them? For example, if you find yourself getting caught up in the heat of the moment, it might help to pause and take a deep breath. (5 minutes)
- Despite the obstacles to taking a third-party perspective, people can be successful in doing so. Over the next four months, try your best to take this third-party perspective during interactions with your partner, especially during disagreements. How might you be most successful in taking this perspective in your interactions with your partner over the next four months? How might taking this perspective help you make the best of disagreements in your relationship? (5 minutes)

Allow these reflections to inform your interactions with your partner over the coming months. **Source: Greater Good In Action; Science Based Practices for a Meaningful Life** https://ggia.berkeley.edu/practice/gaining_perspective_on_an_argument