



MANAGING YOUR MENTAL HEALTH THROUGH THE HOLIDAYS

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As we get closer to the end of the year, the shorter, darker days can put you in a funk. Then you add holiday stress – more commitments, more expenses, and more family gatherings – oh my! It’s enough to make anyone feel overwhelmed or exhausted. And if you struggle with depression on a regular basis, it could be amplified by the added stress.

You may have heard the term “holiday blues” and they are different from a mental illness but a real phenomenon that produces depressed and anxious symptoms over the course of a season. For the next couple of months, we’ll all be busier and more stressed. If you take a few steps to preserve your mental health you can avoid sinking into a seasonal depression.

Practice gratitude, on Thanksgiving and always! Heightened expectations around the holidays or pressure for everything to go well makes events more stressful and makes it easy to forget the things in your life that are going well. Remind yourself of something that makes you smile with a post-it or a reminder on your phone.

Exercise helps manage stress and boost your mood so Move your body for 30 minutes a day. If you’re pressed for time or can’t escape to a gym, look for a quick home workout video to follow along with and get that mood boost without leaving your room!

Schedule your self-care before you’re totally booked. Plan it, look forward to it, and let yourself enjoy the time. You can go to a workout class with a friend or schedule a massage, but self-care doesn’t always look like pampering. Maybe all you have time for today is driving around the block again before you head back into a house full of in-laws – go for it! Don’t feel guilty about taking the time for yourself because it will only make the time with your family better. Book something after the holidays too so you can recharge.

Take the time for your mental health while the holidays are ramping up all of our nerves, and see how much more you can enjoy this time. When you get overwhelmed take a deep breath and remember that we manage to get through it every year. Happy holidays!

References

1. [9 Ways to Beat the Holiday Blues \(healthline.com\)](#)
2. [7 Ways to Cope With Thanksgiving Blues | Psychology Today Australia](#)