

## Feature Article

### 12 Ways to Keep the Holidays Stress-Free

The holidays are supposed to be a time of warmth, joy and excitement. And for many people, they are.

Still, the anxiety of having too much to do in too little time, the pressure of unrealistic expectations and the tendency to overeat and overspend can easily overshadow holiday happiness. The following suggestions will help you enjoy the season to its fullest with a minimum of stress.

#### Eat smart

- Don't arrive at a party starving; you're likely to overeat. Instead, before you leave home eat a piece of fruit, a small salad or a cup of low-fat yogurt. Eating a healthful snack will prevent you from overindulging on mini quiches and other high-fat fare when you arrive.
- Avoid handfuls of anything. At the appetizer table, fill your plate three-quarters full with fresh vegetables and fruit. Reserve the remaining quarter for anything you want, even if it's high in fat, so you don't feel deprived.
- Don't feel obligated to eat everything on your plate or to have dessert. And think twice before going back for seconds.
- If you overeat, get right back into your normal routine the next day.

#### Shop smart

- Give yourself plenty of time to complete your holiday shopping. Shop with an itemized list of what you'll buy for each person and a ballpark figure of what you'll spend.
- Brainstorm for gift ideas. If you're stumped on what to buy, consider what's important to the gift recipient. To personalize a gift that isn't personal, give the story behind it. For a book, write an inscription that explains why you're giving it or mention specific pages the recipient may find interesting.

#### Party smart

- Keep parties simple by having a buffet instead of a formal sit-down dinner. Serve uncomplicated dishes (made with six ingredients or less) that you've made before.
- Buy nonperishable party items days, even weeks, in advance. These include groceries, beverages, candles, napkins and decorations. Save the day before to buy items with a short shelf life, such as fresh fruits, vegetables and flowers.



- Cook ahead. On the day before your party, prepare salad dressings, stews, casseroles, cold sauces, soups, desserts and dips. That way, during the party, you can spend as much time as possible with your guests.
- Hire a helper. To make your party more manageable, employ a teenager or a catering waiter to help you serve during the party and clean up afterward.
- Devise games guests can play to help spark conversation. For example, tape a piece of paper with the name of a movie character onto the back of guests when they arrive. Challenge them to guess who their characters are, with clues provided by the other guests.
- Be sociable. Attending parties when you don't know many people can be stressful. To break the ice, elect yourself the official introducer. If you see someone standing alone, go over and ask nonthreatening openers. For example, ask these questions at a corporate function: How do you fit into the company? Are you a spouse or an employee? What do you do? What does your spouse do?



## This Month's Webinar: 5 Strategies to Actually Enjoy the Holidays This Year

So often, the holidays are depicted as a time of blissful good cheer and family connection. Why do so many of us feel busy, pressured, or lonely each year instead? You have the power to do it differently this time around, no matter what the holidays hold for you. All you need is a strategy-one that actually works. This webinar will share five tips to actually enjoy the holidays this year and will guide you in creating a customized plan to apply them to your personal holiday situation. Let the festivities begin!

Watch this webinar any time throughout the month of October when you log in to IMPACT on the Web at [www.MyImpactSolution.com](http://www.MyImpactSolution.com).

### Monthly Highlights

### Eldercare Spotlight



#### For Peace of Mind, Act Instead of React

Some people's lives seem like a soap opera. But though endless crises and confrontations can be entertaining on TV, they make for frustrating, unsatisfying lives. If you'd rather have peace of mind than daily dramas, you need to take charge of the script. Visit the Emotional Wellbeing Tile for more information.



#### Divorce Mediation Myths

Visit the Legal Tile to check out a list of myths and facts about what divorce mediation is and is not.

Visit [www.MyImpactSolution.com](http://www.MyImpactSolution.com)  
Forgot your login information?  
Give us a call at 800-227-6007.

### Improving Relationship Strain

If you are experiencing a strained relationship with your loved one due to caregiving, finding a solution which improves your emotional bond can help both your loved one's wellness and your own. Here are some tips that can help:

Take a break: This can work to reduce feelings of burnout, and give you the time you need to collect your emotions.

Communicate effectively: Be patient, avoid raising your voice, use tact and consider your loved one's feelings.

Listen to your loved one's preferences: Your loved one may disagree and become upset with your care choices, so, when possible, you should take their preferences into consideration.

Separate the disease from the person: It is fine to be angry at the disease, but taking frustration out on your loved one may upset and confuse them.

Explore resources: If you are still struggling, do not be afraid to seek outside help, such as care coaching services like BRI Care Consultation™.

If you would like more information on how your EAP can be of assistance, give us a call today at 800-227-6007.

**Contributed By: Benjamin Rose Institute on Aging**

Information in IMPACT on Wellness is for general information purposes only and is not intended to replace the counsel or advice of a qualified health professional.

You can contact IMPACT Solutions for professional counseling and guidance 24 hours a day at 800-227-6007.

## *Building Strong Relationships*

### ***Did You Know...***the ability to communicate is the number one predictor of relationship satisfaction?

Sometimes you have to find ways to prioritize your partner while balancing kids, work, and your day-to-day routine.

Your IMPACT Employee Assistance and Work/Life Program provides resources to help strengthen your relationship including:

- 24/7 live support & guidance
- Face-to-Face couples counseling
- Articles and tip sheets on healthy communication, understanding love languages, and balancing your work and personal life
- Online webinars on communicating with your partner
- E-learning on managing disagreement, conflict resolution, and more...

