

5 tips for coping with holiday stress

The holiday season can trigger extra stress, a breakdown in healthy habits or even depression. But it doesn't have to.

Here are five tips for a healthy, happy and more joyful holiday season.

1

Spend time with friends

If you're feeling down, you might be tempted to isolate yourself. But this will make you feel worse. Connecting with others raises the oxytocin levels in our brains and reduces the chance to get depressed.

2

Get out in nature

Fresh air, sunshine and exercise are nature's medication. Serotonin and dopamine are chemicals produced in the brain that improve mood and protect against mental health disorders. Head outdoors, and watch your mood soar.

3

Don't forget your meds

Since schedules often go out the window during the holiday season, it's easy to let your medication slip your mind. Ask a friend or family member, or set up an electronic alert to remind you when it's time to take your medication.

4

Eliminate comparisons

Don't compare your holiday to your friends and neighbors, let alone to what they post on social media. People choose to post the best parts of their lives. What you don't see is the everyday: family drama, problems at work, money struggles.

5

Start a new tradition

If the holiday season seems unbearable, do something different. Change can feel good. Allow yourself to switch things up.

The holidays can be difficult for many of us. A calming, confident voice is your biggest ally when you feel yourself unraveling. Remember your employee assistance program (EAP) can connect you with free, confidential counseling.



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