



## Mental Wellness

### **Live Life to the Ultimate during the Holidays.**

If you strive to get as much satisfaction from your day-to-day life as you can, you'll be happier, mentally healthy and you will be able to live life to the ultimate.

No matter how much time you devote to improving your mental and emotional health, Christmas can be stressful and tiresome. Three things you can do today to unwind during the holidays:

- **Remember to relax.** Balance responsibilities and work with recreation and leisure activities, and give yourself some time out when you feel you need to. Simple breathing exercises, meditation or yoga exercises are perfect for helping you unwind.
- **Take time out for yourself** if you are feeling stressed or upset. Go for a walk, plug in your headphones and listen to some soothing music, or pick up a book for a quick read.
- **Get a good night's sleep.** The excitement and stress of Christmas, plus late nights and catching up with loved ones, can affect sleeping patterns so it's important to be well rested at this time so you can feel your best.

Remember Christmas doesn't have to be perfect. Some of the best times had are when things go wrong and you find yourself having to make things up as you go along instead!

## Live Life to the Ultimate Tips

### **18 Tips for Dealing with Stress and Tension**

Stress and tension are normal reactions to events that threaten us. Such threats can come from accidents, financial troubles and problems on the job or with family. The way we deal with these pressures has a lot to do with our mental, emotional and physical health. The following are suggestions to get you started on managing the stress in your life.

1. Recognize your symptoms of stress.
2. Look at your lifestyle and see what can be changed - in your work situation, your family situation, or your schedule.
3. Use relaxation techniques - yoga, meditation, deep breathing, or massage.
4. Exercise - Physical activity is one of the most effective stress remedies around!
5. Time management - Do essential tasks and prioritize the others. Consider those who may be affected by your decisions, such as family and friends. Use a check list; you will receive satisfaction as you check off completed jobs!
6. Watch your diet - Alcohol, caffeine, sugar, fats and tobacco all put a strain on your body's ability to cope with stress. A diet with a balance of fruits, vegetables, whole grains and foods high in protein but low in fat will help create optimum health. Contact your local Heart and Stroke Foundation for information about healthy eating.

7. Get enough rest and sleep.
8. Talk with others - Talk with friends, professional counsellors, support groups or relatives about what's bothering you.
9. Help others - Volunteer work can be an effective and satisfying stress reducer.
10. Get away for awhile - Read a book, watch a movie, play a game, listen to music or go on vacation. Leave yourself some time that's just for you.
11. Work off your anger - Get physically active, dig in the garden, start a project, or get your spring cleaning done.
12. Give in occasionally - Avoid quarrels whenever possible.
13. Tackle one thing at a time. Don't do too much at once.
14. Don't try to be perfect.
15. Ease up on criticism of others.
16. Don't be too competitive.
17. Make the first move to be friendly.
18. HAVE SOME FUN!! Laugh with people you enjoy!

### **Set a Smart Goal (and achieve it!)**

Unrealistic goals that never seem to be reached add to your stress level. Try setting one goal for yourself this week using the SMART approach:

**Specific** - Pick one small goal and write it down.

**Measurable** - Can you count it or check it off a list?

**Achievable** - Is it realistic? If not, make it smaller.

**Rewarded** - Reward yourself when you reach your goal.

**Time-limited** - Set a specific, realistic date to finish or achieve your goal.

### **Comedy Break - Laugh at Stress**

Set aside some time for laughter, your body's natural stress-release mechanism. Rent your favorite comedy video. Tape a TV show that you know makes you laugh and keep it on hand for stress emergencies. Go to the library and borrow a book that can make you laugh. Read the daily comics in the newspaper. Or, phone the funniest person you know!

### **Walking Breaks**

Walk away from stress instead of sitting down for another cup of stress-inducing caffeine on your coffee break, lunch hour or when you're at home...try going for a stress relieving and energizing walk. If you don't like walking by yourself, try forming a walking club with two or three of your co-workers or friends.