

How to be Holiday Perky, Not a Holiday Turkey

By Mary Sigmann, CPO®

The holidays are meant to be joyful, not draining. These tips will help you save your energy, resources and your sanity.

1. Slow down and savor this special time.

The idea behind a holiday is enjoyment! When you rush through the preparation for a holiday or go through that special day in a blur, you've essentially missed the whole experience. During the season, stop and ask yourself, "How much am I really enjoying this?" Periodically, do a body scan and notice if you are relaxed or jittery. Slow down and bring yourself back into the present moment.

2. Keep decorations to a minimum.

Who says you have to decorate every room, the outside of the house, and the yard? Put up just enough décor to make it festive and then STOP. As you are decorating think about how you will feel when it's time to put it all away.

3. Prioritize. Decide what is really important.

Make a list of your top three priorities and measure everything else you might do during the holiday against those three things. If an activity or a purchase does not fall into alignment with those priorities, let it go. Learn the fine art of saying, "no." The holidays are a time for doing what you want to do, not what others expect of you.

4. Keep regular hours and watch your diet.

If you wear yourself out and get sick, the holiday will be a bust for you as well as for those who depend on you. You can avoid holiday burnout by being proactive about your diet and how you spend your energy. Know your limitations and don't over schedule. Have healthy snacks available, so you don't rely on sweets for quick and handy nourishment. Be mindful of the boundaries you need to establish to keep yourself healthy.

5. Find time to be alone and renew yourself.

It's important to manage your stress so that you don't take it out on others. If you feel yourself getting stressed out or impatient, lay down for a short nap, take a hot bath, or meditate for a few minutes.

6. Delegate. Let others take on some of the responsibility.

Who says you have to do it all? Share some of the holiday duties by assigning jobs to others – even if others don't do it as well. The holiday

season is short and there will be another one right around the corner, so everything doesn't have to be perfect. Decide that whatever happens is good enough and make it as easy and joyful as possible.

7. Give wisely and thoughtfully, and don't spend beyond your resources.

Buy useful gifts. Choose something that will provide the recipient with an experience rather than something that will end up dusty on a shelf or forgotten in a drawer. Examples are phone cards, movie tickets, note cards and stamps or gift certificates to a bookstore or restaurant. Give of yourself with coupons for a personal service – baby-sitting, car washing or house cleaning. A gift doesn't have to be big or expensive to be meaningful. You can also save time and money by creating a gift-giving "theme" and buying or making the same or similar gifts for everyone.

8. Create a positive thought or affirmation.

Write out a thought that expresses your highest hopes for the season. Commit your short affirmation to memory and allow it to carry you through the difficult times. Example: "My body, mind and spirit are overflowing with energy, poise and delight. This is the happiest holiday ever."