



## KEEPING HOLIDAY STRESS AT BAY

### Getting Started and STAYING ACTIVE

If you think getting fit is difficult, you are not alone. Many people find it hard to get started, for many different reasons. Do any of these reasons sound like you?

- I can't exercise because I don't have any equipment.
- I don't have time to exercise.
- I don't know how to exercise.
- My family and friends aren't active.
- Exercise sounds so boring to me.
- Equipment and health clubs cost too much.

If you can relate to any of these statements, it is important that you read on for tips on leading an active lifestyle. You don't have to be an athlete or be involved in an organized sport to be fit. You just have to sit less and move more! It is also important to get other members of your family moving, too.

#### MAKE A FITNESS PLAN.

There are lots of other things that might get in the way of regular exercise. You might think your schedule is full, or you may not be sure how to get started.

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Some people look forward to the holidays all year, while others see the holiday season approaching and are overcome by a sense of dread. *Will life become so hectic that I can't enjoy the holidays? How will I buy what I need to buy and not overspend again this year? How will I ever get everything done that I need to do? How many pounds will I gain this year? Will the family get along?* The list could go on and on, but all these questions, if left unaddressed, lead to the same thing: stress! Try these tips for managing the stress that seems to be built into the holiday season.

#### SET PRIORITIES.

People tend to get wrapped up in trying to create perfection at this time of the year. Set reasonable goals for what you will do to celebrate. Decide in advance what is most important to you and your family, and focus your celebrations around those things. Try to avoid replicating everything your parents did when you were young. Hang on to meaningful traditions, but avoid doing something solely because it is what your mom or dad did.

Don't overschedule! Both you and your kids need downtime to enjoy this special time of the year. Be careful to choose activities based on what you *want* to do rather than what you think you *must* do.

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### MAKE A PLAN.

Once you have decided what your priorities are for holiday celebrations, plan how you will organize yourself to get the important work done. Make a calendar and include all important dates on it (the school play, the neighbor's open house, the drive through the neighborhood to enjoy the holiday decorations, and so on). You may even want to schedule time for any shopping, decorating, baking, writing cards, or other holiday traditions that you have decided will be part of your holiday. Carefully plan your menus, and do your shopping in an organized fashion, with a list. You will be much less likely to forget important ingredients and will eliminate the last-minute running that leaves you exhausted and frazzled.

### KEEP EXPECTATIONS REALISTIC.

It is not your responsibility to be sure that everybody has a perfect holiday, so don't put that demand on yourself.

Holiday joy is something that comes from within a person—you cannot create something that is not there.

### MAKE A BUDGET AND KEEP IT.

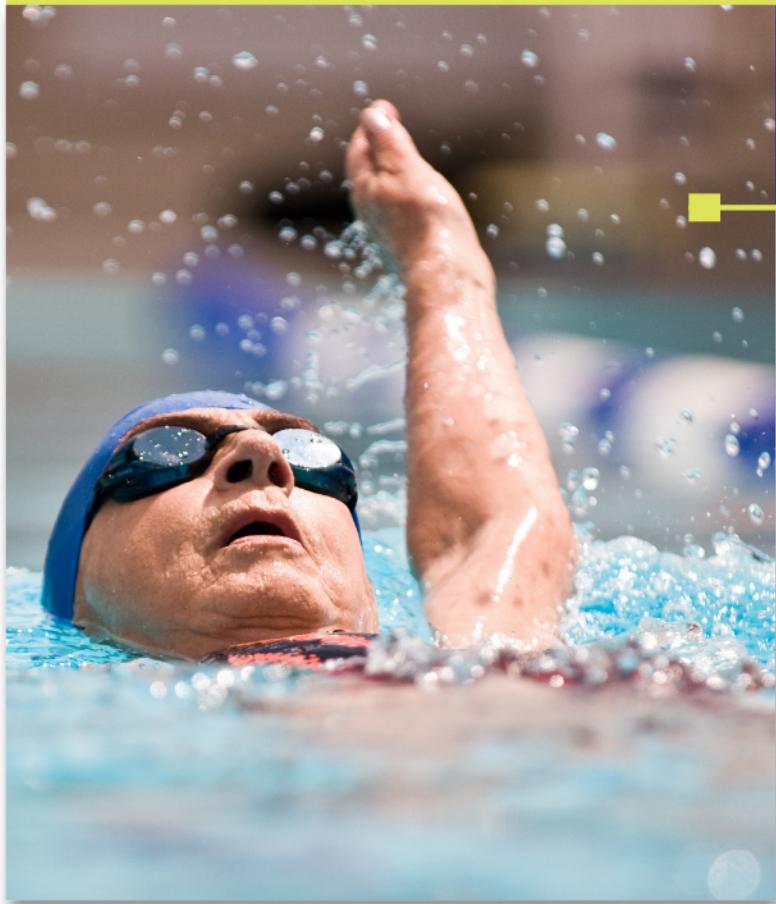
If gift buying is part of your holiday celebration, decide in advance what you can afford to spend this year. Create a list of all the people you will shop for, and allocate a portion of your total holiday budget to each person. That is the easy part—the hard part is sticking to the budget you create! Try to think of less expensive gift options—a baking mix, a nicely framed photograph of a shared memory, or the gift of your time. Overspending during the holidays is a major source of stress, so be careful. Remember that all the gifts in the world cannot buy happiness.

### CARE FOR YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY.

During the holidays, when stress can really take its toll, people tend to neglect doing those things that reduce stress. You may overindulge in food and drink, and leave such things as rest, relaxation, and exercise out of your daily life. Make it a goal to change that this holiday season. Be realistic about the types and amounts of foods you choose. Avoid sugary and fat-laden snacks that may give you a quick boost but will be followed by a drop in energy. Get outside for a brisk walk, and take the kids. Think about what is causing your stress, and make a plan to change the pressures you may be putting on yourself.

Rest, relax,  
and reflect on  
the meaning  
of the season,  
peace!

Workplace Options. (Reviewed 2017). *Keeping holiday stress at bay*. Raleigh, NC: Author.


**YOU CAN**

- Use canned foods as weights
- Go for power walks or run around your neighborhood or a nearby track
- Use your own body weight to strength-train by doing push-ups

**WORKING DIFFERENT MUSCLE GROUPS**

Different kinds of exercises work different muscle groups. You should try to work all of your muscles each week. Some exercises work many muscles, so this is not as hard as you might think! Below is a list of exercises and the kinds of muscles used for each exercise.

| Exercise       | Muscles Worked  |
|----------------|---|
| Push-ups       | Chest, shoulders, arms, abdominals                    |
| Sit-ups        | Abdominals  |
| Jumping Jacks  | Calves (lower leg), inner and outer thighs, buttocks  |
| Running        | Calves, front and back thighs                         |
| Jumping Rope   | Calves, thighs, abdominals, shoulders, arms           |
| Swimming       | Nearly all major muscles                              |
| Dancing        | Nearly all major muscles (depending on type of dance) |
| Walking        | Arms, calves, front and back thigh, abdominals        |
| Squats         | Calves, front and back thighs, buttocks               |
| Inline Skating | Inner and outer thighs, buttocks                      |
| Hula-Hoop      | Lower back, abdominals                                |

## Getting Started and STAYING ACTIVE

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For each situation, there is a solution. Once you get past these challenges, decide when you are going to exercise and which activities you would like to do. When you think about a new physical activity, ask yourself these questions:

- Will you enjoy it?
- Is it safe?
- Is it available to you?
- Do you have the time to do it?
- Do you have friends who do it, too?

If you answered "no" to these questions, find another activity. It is better to find something that fits into your schedule, that you will enjoy, and that you can do safely. The important thing is that you get moving, and there are lots of ways to get started! Walk when you talk on the phone, use the stairs instead of an elevator, and walk or bike to school or work. Don't worry if you don't have athletic equipment—you don't need anything special to exercise.

Office on Women's Health.  
 (Updated 2015, July 29).  
*Getting started and staying active.*  
 Retrieved July 24, 2017, from  
<http://www.girlshealth.gov/>



# TEN TIPS for Volunteering Wisely

## 1. RESEARCH THE CAUSES OR ISSUES IMPORTANT TO YOU.

Look for a group that works with issues about which you feel strongly. You might already be giving money to one of these organizations, and that might be a good place to begin your volunteer experience. If you can't find such an organization, here's a challenging and intriguing thought: Why not start one yourself? You can rally your neighbors to clean up that vacant lot on the corner, patrol the neighborhood, paint an elderly neighbor's house, take turns keeping an eye on the ailing person down the street, or form a group to advocate for a remedy to that dangerous intersection in your neighborhood. There is no end to the creative avenues for volunteering, just as there is no end to the need for volunteers.

## 2. CONSIDER THE SKILLS YOU HAVE TO OFFER.

If you enjoy outdoor work, have a knack for teaching, or just enjoy interacting with people, you may want to look for volunteer work that would incorporate these aspects of your personality. Many positions require a volunteer who has previous familiarity with certain equipment (such as computers), or who possesses certain skills (such as ability in athletics or communications). For one of these positions, you might decide to do something comparable to what you do on the job during your workday or something that you already enjoy as a hobby. This sort of position allows you to jump right into the work without having to take training to prepare for the assignment.

## 3. WOULD YOU LIKE TO LEARN SOMETHING NEW?

Perhaps you would like to learn a new skill or gain exposure to a new situation. Consider seeking a volunteer opportunity where you'll learn something new. For example, volunteering to work



on the newsletter for the local animal shelter will improve your writing and editing abilities—skills that may help you in your career. Or, volunteering can simply offer a change from your daily routine. For example, if your full-time job is in an office, you may decide to take on a more active volunteer assignment, such as leading tours at an art museum or building a playground. Many nonprofits seek out people who are willing to learn. Realize beforehand, however, that such work might require a time commitment for training before the actual volunteer assignment begins.

## 4. COMBINE YOUR GOALS.

Look for volunteer opportunities that will also help you achieve your other goals in life. For example, if you want to lose a few extra pounds, pick an active volunteer opportunity, such as cleaning a park or working with kids. If you've been meaning to take a cooking class, try volunteering at a food bank that teaches cooking skills.

## 5. DON'T OVERCOMMIT YOUR SCHEDULE.

Make sure the volunteer hours you want to give fit into your hectic life, so that you don't frustrate your family, exhaust yourself, shortchange the organization you're trying to help, or neglect your job. Do you want a long-term assignment or something temporary? If you are unsure about your availability or want to see how the work suits you before making an extensive commitment, see if the organization will start you out on a limited number of hours until you get the feel of things. It's better to start out slowly than to commit yourself to a schedule you can't or don't want to fulfill.

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## 6. NONPROFITS MAY HAVE QUESTIONS, TOO.

While most nonprofits are eager to find volunteer help, they have to be careful when accepting the services, you offer. If you contact an organization with an offer to volunteer your time, you may be asked to come in for an interview, fill out a volunteer application, or describe your qualifications and your background just as you would at an interview for a paying job. It is in the organization's interest and more beneficial to the people it serves to make certain you have the skills needed, that you are truly committed to doing the work, and that your interests match those of the nonprofit. Furthermore, in volunteer work involving children or other at-risk populations, there are legal ramifications for the organization to consider.

## 7. CONSIDER VOLUNTEERING AS A FAMILY.

Think about looking for a volunteer opportunity suitable for parents and children to do together, or for a husband and wife to take on as a team. When a family volunteers to work together at a nonprofit organization, the experience can bring them closer together, teach young children the value of giving their time and effort, introduce everyone in the family to skills and experiences never before encountered, and give the entire family a shared experience as a wonderful family memory.

## 8. WHAT ABOUT VIRTUAL VOLUNTEERING?

Yes, there is such a thing! If you have computer access and the necessary skills, some organizations now offer the opportunity to do volunteer work over the computer. This might take the form of giving free legal advice, typing a college term paper for a person with a disability, or simply keeping in contact with a homebound individual who has e-mail. This sort of volunteering might be well suited to you if you have limited time, no transportation, or a physical disability that precludes you getting about freely. Virtual volunteering can also be a way for you to give time if you simply enjoy computers and want to employ your computer skills in your volunteer work.



## 9. THESE ARE THINGS YOU PROBABLY NEVER THOUGHT ABOUT!

Many community groups are looking for volunteers, and some may not have occurred to you. Most people know that hospitals, libraries, and religious organizations use volunteers for a great deal of their work, but here are some volunteer opportunities that may not have crossed your mind:

- Day care centers, public schools, and colleges
- Halfway houses, drug rehabilitation centers, prisons, and shelters for battered women and children
- Retirement centers and homes for the elderly, meals-on-wheels, and religious- or community-sponsored soup kitchens or food pantries
- Museums, art galleries, community theaters, and monuments
- Community choirs, bands, and orchestras
- The Neighborhood Watch Institute (<http://www.nnwi.org/>), neighborhood parks, youth organizations, sports teams, and after-school programs
- Historical restorations, battlefields, national parks, fraternal organizations, and civic clubs

## 10. GIVE A VOICE TO YOUR HEART THROUGH YOUR GIVING AND VOLUNTEERING!

Bring your heart and your sense of humor to your volunteer service, along with your enthusiastic spirit, which in itself is a priceless gift. What you'll get back will be immeasurable!

USA Freedom Corps. (n.d.). *Ten tips for volunteering wisely*. Retrieved January 30, 2015, from the Network for Good website: <http://www.networkforgood.org/>



- Crackers
- Canned juices
- Nonperishable pasteurized milk
- High-energy foods
- Vitamins
- Food for infants
- Comfort foods

### FOOD SAFETY AND SANITATION

Flood; fire; national disaster; or the loss of power from high winds, snow, or ice could jeopardize the safety of your food. Knowing what to do before and after an emergency can help you reduce your risk of illness and minimize the amount of food that may be lost due to spoilage.

Power outages can occur at any time of the year, and it may take from a few hours to several days for electricity to be restored to residential areas. Without electricity or a cold source, food stored in refrigerators and freezers can become unsafe. Bacteria in food grow rapidly at temperatures between 40°F and 140°F, and if these foods are consumed, people can become very sick.

### DOs

#### DO THE FOLLOWING:

- Keep food in covered containers.
- Keep cooking and eating utensils clean.
- Keep garbage in closed containers and dispose outside, burying garbage if necessary.
- Keep your hands clean by washing them frequently with soap and water that has been boiled or disinfected.
- Discard any food that has come into contact with contaminated floodwater.
- Discard any food that has been at room temperature for 2 hours or more.
- Discard any food that has an unusual odor, color, or texture.
- Use ready-to-feed formula, if possible, for formula-fed infants. If using ready-to-feed formula is not possible, it is best to use bottled water to prepare powdered or concentrated formula. If bottled water is not available, use boiled water. Use treated water to prepare formula only if you do not have bottled or boiled water. Breast-fed infants should continue breast-feeding.

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## Emergency FOOD SUPPLIES

Consider the following things when putting together your emergency food supplies:

- Store at least a 3-day supply of nonperishable food.
- Choose foods your family will eat.
- Remember any special dietary needs.
- Avoid foods that will make you thirsty.
- Choose salt-free crackers, whole-grain cereals, and canned foods with high liquid content.

Following a disaster, there may be power outages that could last for several days. Stock canned foods, dry mixes, and other staples that do not require refrigeration, cooking, water, or special preparation. Be sure to include a manual can opener and eating utensils. You can download a list of recommended supplies here: <http://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/90354>.

### SUGGESTED EMERGENCY FOOD SUPPLIES

The following items are suggested when selecting emergency food supplies. You may already have many of these on hand:

- Ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits, and vegetables
- A can opener
- Protein or fruit bars
- Dry cereal or granola
- Peanut butter
- Dried fruit
- Nuts

## DON'Ts

### AVOID THE FOLLOWING:

- Eating foods from cans that are swollen, dented, or corroded, even though the product may look safe to eat
- Eating any food that looks or smells abnormal, even if the can looks normal
- Letting garbage accumulate inside, for both fire and sanitation reasons

**Note:** Thawed food usually can be eaten if it is still "refrigerator cold." It can be refrozen if it still contains ice crystals. To be safe, remember, "When in doubt, throw it out." For more information about food safety during an emergency, visit <http://www.foodsafety.gov>.

### COOKING

Alternative cooking sources in times of emergency include candle warmers, chafing dishes, fondue pots, or a fireplace. Charcoal grills and camp stoves are for outdoor use only. Commercially canned food may be eaten out of the can without warming. If you choose to do so, follow these tips to heat food in a can:

- Remove the label.
- Thoroughly wash and disinfect the can. (Use a diluted solution of 1 part bleach to 10 parts water.)
- Open the can before heating.

### MANAGING FOOD WITHOUT POWER

#### BE PREPARED.

- Have a refrigerator thermometer.
- Know where you can get dry ice.
- Keep a few days' worth of ready-to-eat foods on hand that do not require cooking or cooling.

#### WHEN THE POWER GOES OUT

- Keep the refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible.



- The refrigerator will keep food cold for about 4 hours if it is unopened.
- Refrigerators should be kept at 40°F or below for proper food storage.

#### ONCE THE POWER IS RESTORED

- Check the temperature inside the refrigerator and freezer.
- If an appliance thermometer was kept in the freezer, check the temperature when the power comes back on. If the freezer thermometer reads 40°F or below, the food is safe and may be refrozen. If a thermometer has not been kept in the freezer, check each package of food to determine its safety. You can't rely on appearance or odor. If the food still contains ice crystals or is 40°F or below, it is safe to refreeze or cook.
- Refrigerated food should be safe as long as the power was out for no more than 4 hours. Keep the door closed as much as possible.
- Discard any perishable food (such as meat, poultry, fish, eggs, or leftovers) that has been above 40°F for 2 hours or more.

#### USING DRY ICE

- Under normal circumstances you should not keep dry ice in your freezer. If your freezer is functioning properly, it will cause the unit to become too cold, and your freezer may shut off. However, if you lose power for an extended period of time, dry ice is the best way to keep things cold.
- Twenty-five pounds of dry ice will keep a 10-cubic-foot freezer below freezing for 3 to 4 days.
- If you use dry ice to keep your food cold, make sure it does not come in direct contact with the food.
- Use care when handling dry ice, and wear dry, heavy gloves to avoid injury.

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Ready. (n.d.). *Food*. Retrieved September 20, 2016, from <https://www.ready.gov/>