

Balance:

Maintaining Well-Being During
the Holiday Season



What Is Stress?

- A reaction of the body/mind to any demand made upon it
- **Part of everyday life**
- Can be positive or negative
- Manageable!



What Causes General Stress?

- There are two common types of stress:
 1. **External stressors** – Environmental factors or events
 2. **Internal stressors** – Specific behaviors, traits, or lifestyle choices

Recognizing Signs of Stress

- Rapid heartbeat
- Headache
- Stiff neck and/or tight shoulders
- Backache
- Rapid breathing
- Sweating and sweaty palms
- Upset stomach, nausea or diarrhea
- Feeling irritable, frustrated and/or angry
- Exhaustion
- Difficulty concentrating
- Excessive worrying and fear
- Loss of confidence

What Can Cause Holiday Stress?

- Family
- Shopping
- Travel
- Entertaining
- Social commitments
- Loss
- Others?

Outside our daily lives,
with our daily
obligations and stress,
let's add the holidays!

The holiday season can
be a wonderful time of
the year, but it can also
compound feelings
of stress.

Remember, stress can
be good and bad,
sometimes at the
same time!

Assess Your Stress

- Do I often feel out of control?
- Do I feel constant pressure to achieve?
- Do I have difficulty concentrating?
- Do I have feelings of depression, helplessness, anxiety or panic?
- Do I have difficulty falling asleep, or do I wake frequently during the night?
- Do I suffer from frequent headaches?
- Have I experienced a significant loss or increase in appetite?

Assess Your Stress

- Do I feel unusually tired?
- Do I cry or feel like I might cry often?
- Do I feel faint or get dizzy for no apparent reason?
- Do I experience nausea?
- Do I experience shortness of breath or feel tightness in my chest without exertion?
- Do I regularly feel the need to have a drink or smoke to relax?

Tips for Managing Stress

Identify the stress

Take charge

Set limits

Identify the Stress

Determine

- Determine what about a situation is causing stress

Consider

- Consider your role
- Consider if the issue will matter 5 days, weeks, months or years from right now

Ask

- Ask yourself, "So what?"
 - My mother in law will say that my house isn't organized.
 - I don't know what to buy for my friend?! What if he doesn't like it?

Take Charge

Family/Visitors

- Set boundaries and rules in advance
- Make and stick to a time schedule

Shopping

- Set a budget
- Make lists

Travel

- Plan accordingly
- Allow for plenty of time

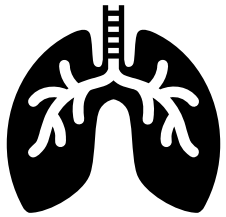
Set Limits

- Become more self-aware
 - Determine what is important to you
 - Take time to think about your thoughts, feelings and desires; what inspires you; what brings you joy; the significant people in your life; your biggest priorities; and how you want to spend your time
 - Start with a clear sense of whether you want to say “yes” or “no” to the invitations, requests or even unspoken expectations coming from other people in your life
- Honor your needs
 - Honor your need to be with others, to be alone or to skip the holiday season altogether
 - The holidays may be a painful reminder of a loved one’s absence; if you’re feeling sad and overwhelmed, let yourself feel these feelings

Set Limits

- Be calm and clear when setting boundaries
 - If there are issues you would prefer not to discuss, script a response ahead of time
 - "I would prefer you not comment on my..."
 - "If you want to engage in this kind of conversation, you'll have to do so without me. I'm not talking about this with you."
- Set boundaries around travel and gatherings
 - If you feel overwhelmed, know that your plans can always be tweaked, and everything is an option
 - If you have small children, suggest family comes to your house
- Set boundaries with yourself
 - The fewer things on your plate, the less you'll be running around and feeling frantic, and the more time you can spend relaxing with your loved ones and savoring the spirit of the holiday season

Stress Reduction Techniques



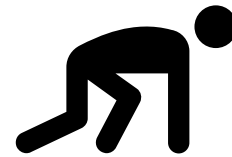
Controlled
Breathing



Emotional
Freedom
Technique
(EFT)



Physical
Exercise



Yoga /
Stretch Break



Reframe
Thoughts



Meditation

Breathing Exercise: The Elevator Breath

This exercise matches your breathing with movement. You can use it as a tool to help you pause and calm down.

- Sit tall, like a building. Stack your hands in front of you – the one below is the ground floor and the other is the elevator that can go up and down.
- As you breathe in, raise the top hand up. Keep moving it until you finish breathing in.
- As you breathe out, bring the elevator down while keeping your bottom hand in place. Try to get your hands to meet just as you run out of air.

Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT)

- EFT or tapping may alleviate some emotional distress
- EFT can draw a person's attention to their body and breathing
- EFT may serve as a mental distraction from the issues that are causing anxiety or stress
- EFT may help to restore balance and a sense of well-being

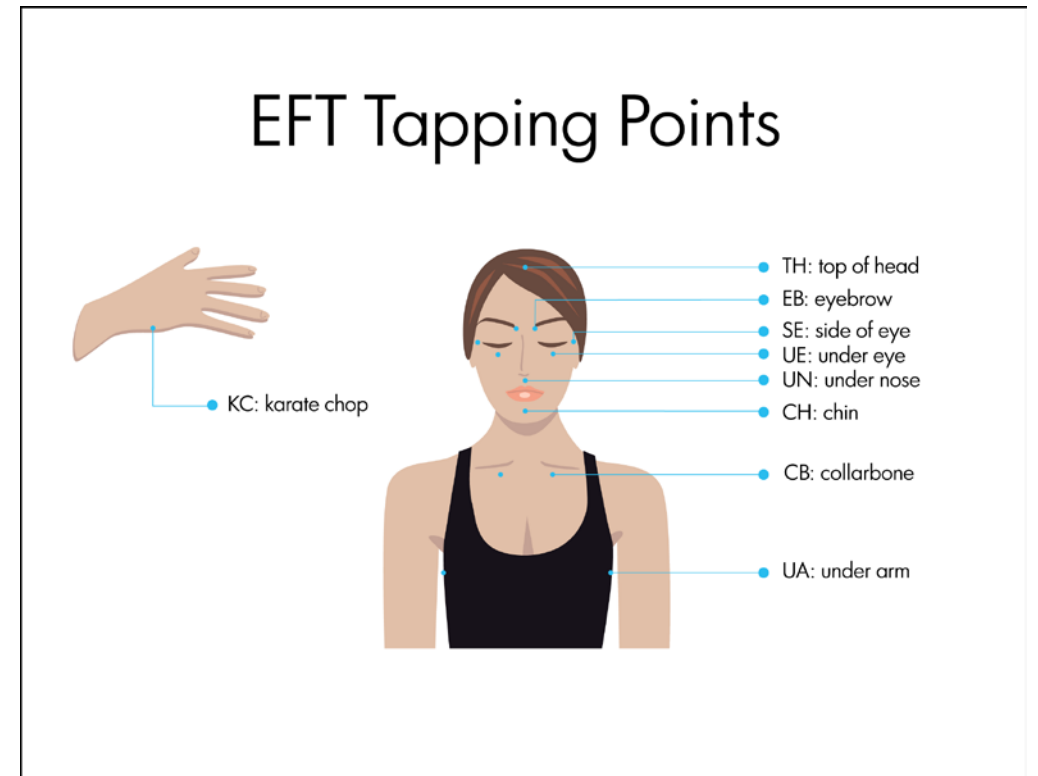


Image Source: www.womenlines.com

Physical Exercise

- Exercise increases your overall health and sense of well-being, which puts more pep in your step every day, but exercise also has some direct stress-busting benefits
- Physical activity helps bump up the production of your brain's feel-good neurotransmitters, called endorphins



Chair Yoga and Stretches

- Minimize discomfort from sitting at work
- Increase concentration and focus
- Increase energy
- Reduces fatigue



Reframe

- Reframing is a way of changing the way you look at something, thus changing the way you experience it
- *Get to vs. Have to*
 - I *get to* spend time with my extended family
 - I *have to* spend time with my extended family
- When we think of demanding occasions as threats, we revert to survival mode and our attention is often drawn to shortcomings
- When we think of demanding situations as opportunities, we become open to accessing our potential and our ability to take action and make changes
- Reframing allows us to lower our guard and enjoy the moment
 - Chances are you will have to do "it" anyway, so why not make it as enjoyable as possible?

Meditation: Body Scan

- Begin by bringing your attention to the sensations of your breath.
- When you're ready, direct your attention to the soles of your feet, opening your mind to whatever sensations are there to be noticed.
- Perhaps you are noticing the pressure on the soles of your feet as the weight of your legs rests on them. Perhaps the soles of your feet feel warm or cool.
- Just notice. No need to judge or engage in discursive thinking. If your mind is pulled away or wanders, redirect your attention, firmly and gently.
- Next, move your attention to the tops of your feet, ankles, lower legs, knees, and so forth.
- Gradually scan through your body, noticing sensations, noticing discomfort, and noticing areas of your body where you detect an absence of sensations. No need to search for sensations; just keep scanning through your body, taking your time and being open to what is there.

General Tips for Managing Stress

- Define your goals
- Make time to relax
- Establish a support system
- Express your feelings
- Don't over commit
- Focus on problem-solving
- Set limits; say, "No"
- Realize you're not perfect
- Smile or laugh often
- Practice relaxation and stress reduction techniques
- Get enough sleep
- Take notice of your body

Tips to Avoid Holiday Stress

- Make a “to-do” list
- Get help
- Don’t overcommit
- Plan ahead



Tips for Holiday Shopping and Gift-Giving

- Shop early
- Be creative
- Wrap gifts as you buy them
- Write out holiday cards in advance
- Mail presents and cards early



Controlling Holiday Spending

- Make a budget and stick to it
- Create a list with everyone you give a gift to on it
 - Determine a maximum amount each person is allotted
 - Note the gift next to the person's name as you purchase
- Only buy items if you know to whom they will be gifted
 - "This will work for... somebody!"
- Look for value, but resist impulse
 - "This is too good of a deal not to buy it!"
- Keep focused on OTHERS
 - Make your own wish list, but remember you're not shopping for YOU!
- Keep receipts organized and confirm return policies
- Avoid paying with credit as often as possible

Tips for Holiday Travel

- Make travel plans early
- Allow plenty of time for travel
 - Plan for stops
- Be aware of airline regulations
- Anticipate traffic
- Think about car activities
 - Charge devices and keep extra batteries
 - Choose movies
 - Pack drinks/snacks



Managing Work and Family

- Make reliable childcare arrangements
- Make adult care arrangements
- Have a back-up care plan in place
- Get organized
- Keep the lines of communication open
 - Shared calendar
- Use downtime to your advantage
- Simplify tasks
- Ask for help
- Be positive
- Good enough is good enough!
- Make time for loved ones

Children and the Holidays

- Maintain routines
- Make sure kids get plenty of sleep
- Try to eat healthily
- Keep kids informed of plans
- Schedule downtime
- Limit screen time
- Set expectations and limits
- Emphasize values
- Create and maintain traditions

Taking Care of Yourself

- Get plenty of sleep
- Be aware of how much you are eating and/or drinking
- Strive to be healthy
- Schedule downtime
- Recognize signs of stress in yourself



Managing Holiday-Related Sadness

- Be realistic and acknowledge the cause of your sadness
- Create new traditions
- Remember lost loved ones
- Set differences aside
- Do something for others
- Plan post-holiday activities

Caterpillar Employee Assistance Program (EAP)



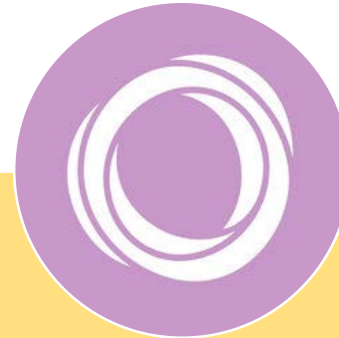
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