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Holiday How-to: Avoiding Seasonal Stress

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The holidays can be heartwarming, but they can also raise your heart rate. Between cooking, shopping, hosting, working and having the kids at home for an extra few weeks, self care often takes a backseat. But maintaining the 100 Year Lifestyle year round is the best thing you can do for you body, and can help you avoid the effects of holiday stress.

Relatively Speaking

As much as you may love your Aunt Ida and enjoy seeing your third cousins each year, having extended family around can be stressful—especially if you're hosting out-of-towners for an extended period of time. Plan ahead for your visitors and avoid clashing with your clan. During the holidays, there's plenty to do, so grab tickets to a local holiday play or ballet. Lend them your car and send them on a winter wonderland tour of the most picturesque sights in town. Also, share the burden: Even if you're the one with extra guest rooms, ask other family members in the area to entertain your guests for an afternoon so you can focus on other tasks (or just meditate for an hour). This will allow you some necessary breathing room and keep you sane over the long haul-iday.

Sinful Sweets are Coming to Town

When the sugarplum fairy comes to town, resistance can seem futile. While it's understandable to want to taste test all the holiday treats that seem to materialize in front of you, it's important not to go overboard. Sugar binges will cause your energy to spike and dip, increasing stress and fatigue. Allow yourself to sample, but avoid digging in to an entire batch of one thing. If you love to bake, but don't have a horde of hungry people to feed, consider giving half to a soup kitchen or shel-

ter. When festivities aren't going on, make a point to pack in lots of green veggies, healthy snacks and water. Instead of having a candy dish, put out a bowl of almonds and walnuts with a snazzy nutcracker. If you surround yourself with reminders of your 100 Year Lifestyle, you'll be more inclined to live it twelve months a year.

Sweat It Out!

With all of the prepping and celebrating during December, it can be easy to let your fitness slide. While your usual exercise routine may be interrupted, try to make up the difference in creative ways. Have a snowball fight with the kids, power walk while you hunt for the perfect gift, or play holiday tunes and bop around the house. Not only will you be engaging in physical activity that relieves holiday stress, it will make getting back into your routine *much* easier once things calm down. And don't forget about the kids. While they're taking two weeks off from gym class and school sports, it can be tempting to watch two weeks of holiday specials. Enlisting them to shovel the driveway, hang lights or complete other tasks will help you out, keep them engaged and encourage 100 Year Lifestyle habits at a young age.

“Starting next year...”

During the holiday season, foregoing our healthy habits with the vague hope of jumping back in on January 1 can take you months to get back on track. Instead, follow some of the tips above to help you stay on track and still enjoy the season. You'll feel better about yourself, have less stress, and be around for a hundred holidays to come!