

42 TIPS FOR HAPPY, HEALTHY HOLIDAYS

FROM THE EXPERTS AT THE ARTHRITIS FOUNDATION



Happy, Healthy Holidays

DON'T JUST SURVIVE THE HOLIDAY HUBBUB. MAKE IT YOUR BEST YET!

Parties, gifts, friends and family: What's not to love about the holiday season? Plenty, when you end up stressed out, exhausted and in pain from overdoing it. It can be hard to keep the extra chores and expectations from spinning out of control.

But it doesn't have to be that way. Here are 42 tips to make tasks easier, keep stress and pain in check – and keep the merry in your merrymaking this holiday season, from Thanksgiving to New Year's Day.

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COOK SMARTER, NOT HARDER



1 Set up prepping and cooking stations at a table so you can sit while you work, and keep bowls and tools within easy reach.

2 Choose dishes you can prep in advance, those with limited ingredients and those that freeze well.

3 Limit the dishes you cook by asking guests to bring a dish. Or make it a potluck meal – ask guests to sign up for dishes via an invitation app or website.

4 Buy pre-chopped, -sliced or -diced ingredients or use a food processor, mandoline, spiralizer, rolling mincer or rocker knife to achieve desired cuts.

5 Use easy-to-clean pots and pans like silicone, which are also lightweight. If metal pans are a must, use disposable pans or line yours with foil.

6 Fill up the freezer. Whether it's dinner, snacks for visitors or party hors d'oeuvres, cook in advance and freeze it, then pull it out when you need it.

EAT HEALTHY, ALL HOLIDAY LONG



Make cleanup a snap. Use high-end disposable plates, cups, utensils and tablecloths for serving.

7 Limit sugar and saturated fat, both of which can worsen inflammation.

8 Have a healthy snack before going to a party. While at the party, pick one sweet treat and have a modest portion. If hosting, send leftover desserts home with guests.

9 Don't let an insistent hostess break your willpower. Say, "Thank you, but I don't eat chocolate truffles/spinach dip/eggnog." It's more

effective for sticking with a diet than "I can't," which implies deprivation.

10 Imbibe wisely, if at all. Alcohol contributes to inflammation, dehydrates and can make it hard to control hunger. Ask your doctor if it's safe to drink with your meds.

11 Don't linger near the spread; choose a few items for your plate, then move away and focus on socializing instead of food.

KEEP OTHER HEALTHY HABITS



12 Don't drop your fitness routine. It helps keep those calories in check and boosts endorphins, the body's natural painkillers.

13 Make chores count for fitness. Shopping online saves time but browsing store to store adds steps to your walking workout.

14 Keep stress in check. Research shows stress can increase disease activity and arthritis symptoms, so take some down time from the holiday

hubbub. Go for a walk, meditate, take a hot bath – anything that will relax you.

15 Get enough shut-eye. Poor sleep, which affects about two-thirds of people with chronic pain, can increase pain, inflammation, anxiety and weight gain.

16 It's a busy time of year so be sure to stick with your medication regimen. Skipping meds can worsen symptoms and disease progression.

STAY CONNECTED



17 Lonely? Get nostalgic. Recalling good times may make you long for the past, but it can also ease feelings of isolation, according to research.

18 Share the joy. Invite family and friends to a tree-trimming party and ask them to contribute an ornament to the tree or help hang yours.


19 Keep it intimate. Focus on spending time with just a few special people. Have a

small get together with some make-ahead nibbles and a handful of loved ones.

20 Seek harmony. Go caroling with friends or to a holiday concert. Research shows music therapy and singing can relieve depression, anxiety and pain.

21 Smile. Even if you're ticked off at a rude clerk, take a few deep breaths, and smile. It can reduce stress and it might even be contagious.

ENTERTAIN WITH LESS STRESS



Recruit help. Splurge on a housecleaning service for your party, and hire a local teen to help answer the door, take coats and serve food.

22 Set the table a few days before the big meal with plates and glasses turned over to protect from dust, then flip them over the day of the event. Or serve on fancy recyclable or disposable dinnerware – it's light and will ease cleanup.

23 Rather than reheating dishes individually in the microwave, cover dishes and place them in a 200-degree oven 30 to 40 minutes before serving.

24 Who says you have to cook? If you can't hire a caterer, stock your freezer with

simple finger foods. Or order hors d'oeuvres and desserts from a restaurant or grocery store.

25 If family or friends are staying at your house, discuss a plan with them well in advance so you're all prepared for any extra work. Then recruit a friend to help you prepare for visitors.

26 Supply your visitors with brochures and maps of local sights that they can visit without you, so you're not responsible for all the entertaining.

DECK THE HALLS WITH EASE



27 Instead of a heavy centerpiece, use light-weight items like pine cones in a basket or Christmas tree balls in a bowl.

28 Use greenery. Wreaths, poinsettias, a small rosemary tree and other live plants make easy, attractive holiday décor and can reduce stress.


29 Try a pre-lit, artificial tree to avoid stringing lights and reduce cleanup. Hang light-weight ornaments and avoid those with pinch clips.

30 Choose a tree shorter than you or focus on areas of the tree you can easily reach; leave the rest for others.

31 For a simple, showy display outside, project holiday images on the front of your house with floodlights.

32 Get creative for New Year's. Fill bottles with strands of tiny lights, group glow sticks in a vase and drape lights across counters.

SHOP, DON'T DROP



Ship, don't schlep. If you're traveling, buy gifts online and have them shipped. For a fee, you can have them wrapped, too.

33 Take a tip from Santa. Make a list and check it twice! Shop online as much as possible, but if you're going to the mall, jot down who's getting which gifts, and check online before you go to see which stores carry it and compare prices.

34 Pace yourself. Shop an hour or less each outing. If you're planning a longer trip, take breaks to rest every 15 to 30 minutes.

35 Be an early bird. Shop before the holiday rush. If you've missed that window, shop

when you feel your best or early in the day, when crowds are smaller, to minimize time standing in line.

36 Get cart smart. Stash packages in a folding cart (available at amazon.com) to avoid the strain of carrying them. Use it for grocery shopping, too.

37 Stick to a budget. Plan how much you'll spend on gifts, entertaining and other holiday expenses. It will reduce your stress now – and when the bills come in.

GET GIFT-WISE



Start wrapping and decorating weeks in advance, and give yourself plenty of breaks.

38 Head off gift anxiety. Keep track of clothing sizes and color preferences, and jot down ideas so you won't get stumped and stressed.

39 Set up an area for wrapping – clear a surface high enough to avoid leaning over and straining your back.

40 Better yet, don't wrap. Save your hands from cutting, taping and ribbon-tying by

placing gifts in decorative bags. Or take advantage of gift-wrapping services at stores and online retailers.

41 Draw names for gift-giving. Instead of buying for everyone, buy only for the person whose name you drew – saving time, money and stress.

42 Make a gift basket. Showcase several gifts in a basket or bucket, cover with cellophane paper and wrap it with a bow.



It's
GREAT

To Meet You

We're so excited to have you in our community and can't wait to help you **Live Your Yes!**

Helpful Resources

To get started on your personal journey, we hope you'll take advantage of some of the many tools and resources designed for you. Here are a few to get you started.

- ▶ Join a **Live Yes! Connect Group** today to make connections and get information and resources to help you manage your pain.
- ▶ Have questions? Our licensed clinical staff is available to you to provide **one-on-one personal support**.
- ▶ **A variety of tools** are accessible online to help you reduce pain, promote your independence and live your best life.
- ▶ Ready to connect locally? Check out programs and **events in your area**.

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