

30+ WAYS TO DE-STRESS

IN LESS THAN 10 MINUTES

- Listen to your favorite tunes
- Head outside
- Stretch
- Meditate
- Read for pleasure
- Walk, bike, skateboard around the block
- Count to 10
- Dance
- Journal
- Write down 10 things you're grateful for
- Doodle or draw
- Tell some jokes
- Call a friend
- Chew a piece of gum
- Focus & notice your present surroundings (grounding)
- Disconnect from tech
- Look at a happy photo
- Squeeze a stress ball
- Watch a funny YouTube video
- Punch a pillow
- Deep, slow breathing
- Read an inspirational quote
- Spend time with your pets
- Practice yoga poses
- Do 20 jumping jacks
- Do something nice for someone
- Sit in the sun
- Visualize a safe, comforting place
- Pick some flowers
- Give yourself a neck massage
- Take a shower
- Kick a soccer ball

S

Stand back: Remove yourself from the stressful situation.

T

Take a deep breath: Count to five and think about the choice that's best for you.

R

Relax: Do something that relaxes you - take a bath, read, listen to music, etc.

E

Exercise: Get that stressful energy out in a way that works for you.

S

Sleep, take a nap or just rest up for a while.

S

Speak: Talk to someone about it and share your emotions.

Some Suggestions for Coping with the Holidays

1. Do what you can to be with people you enjoy.
2. Try not to get so involved with the holiday that you forget to take time by yourself - take a quiet walk, enjoy the snow.
3. Consider going to a special Christmas celebration -a party, a concert; if only to enjoy the smiles of others for an evening.
4. Don't be afraid to express your feelings - you may feel sadness that others around you are feeling too. Sharing it can lessen the pain.
5. Remember the fun of past Christmases. A gift that time will not take away.
6. Try to buy yourself something special - just because you're special and deserve it!
7. Before you decide whether or not to go to a family celebration or-other festive events, carefully assess the pros and cons of attending. You may be surprised.
8. Do something special for someone else who may be feeling lonely too. Christmas is a time for sharing.
9. Ask someone to do something special for you - it's okay to ask for something that would help make this Christmas special.

10 Common Holiday Stresses and How to Cope with Them

The holidays can be demanding for many reasons, but if you're prone to anxiety, they can be downright overwhelming. The gifts, the parties, the baking, the family—or perhaps the absence of these things—can make the season stressful, chaotic or just plain lonely.

But even in the midst of all this holiday hubbub, you *can* take control of your anxiety. With some practical strategies for managing the stress of this season, you may even end up enjoying this frenetic time of year. Look for these common holiday complaints in your life and use the tips below to find peace and joy in this year's holiday season:

1. I can't get it all done! The entertaining, shopping, travel, and myriad other tasks that accompany the holidays can just feel like too much on top of an already-packed schedule. If you are feeling pulled in too many different directions, take a moment to slow down.

Take the opportunity to plan menus and consider gift ideas ahead of time. Make lists of the items you will need and then give yourself a few days to add anything you may have forgotten before heading out to brave the crowds. By organizing, prioritizing and grouping tasks together, you can minimize the stress of multiple trips to the grocery store or mall and avoid last-minute scrambling.

2. I can't afford this! Beginning in September (or maybe even August!) we are bombarded with television and magazine ads depicting holiday tables overflowing with food and gifts stockpiled under beautifully decorated fir trees. It is easy to overspend in an attempt to reach these holiday expectations.

Set a budget and avoid the temptation to stray. When you are making your gift lists, determine how much you can spend on each person and stick with it! Consider pooling resources to buy group gifts for friends. Draw names from a hat and buy gifts for one family member rather than all of them. Think about handmade gifts like baked goods, ornaments, or a recipe book or photo album. Or give the gift of time by babysitting for a friend or helping your grandmother clean her attic — it's free and often the most thoughtful present you can give.

3. This isn't how I thought it would be! The holidays come packed with high expectations. Norman Rockwell and Martha Stewart have irreversibly colored our visions of what the holiday season "should" be, making it difficult to not be disappointed by reality.

Lower your expectations. Try for a "good enough" holiday season. By keeping expectations realistic and focusing on what's really important to you, you may just find that your "good enough" holiday turns out to be "pretty great" after all.

4. I can't stand my family! This is the time of year when families feel compelled to come together in peaceful, loving harmony—whether they like it or not. If your family is truly abusive, unpleasant, or unhealthy for you, know that you have the choice to decline spending time with them.

If like most families, however, they are just mildly irritating, boastful, opinionated, or hypercritical, use this opportunity to practice your coping and communication skills. Pick your battles—do you really want to argue about politics or ancient slights over turkey and stuffing with the whole family witnessing? Let it go for one day. Walk away and take a break if that works best. If you need to sort through personal and ideologic differences, find another time when you can discuss these things privately. Set the tone by doing your best to not criticize others and to accept your family for who they are—likely imperfect and often times annoying—but family nonetheless.

5. I'm lonely! On the flip side, this season can often be a time when the absence of family or social connections becomes highlighted. If you are far from family, try creative ways to connect with them like email, videos or Skype. If you find yourself feeling alone, look for local holiday concerts or community events to attend. Find out if any co-workers may also be far from family or without holiday plans and have a potluck. Consider spending your time giving to someone else in need. Volunteer at a local soup kitchen or food pantry or distribute gifts to needy children. Helping someone else makes you feel good and can broaden your social relationships.

6. I hate crowds! I recall being stuck in an hours-long traffic jam one Thanksgiving Eve while my car radio blared Andy Williams' The Most Wonderful Time of the Year. The irony was not lost on me. Sometimes you just have to laugh. The traffic, crowds and interminably long lines are, unfortunately, as much a part of the season as cranberry sauce and candy canes.

But instead of frustration or anger, try humor, kindness, or mindfulness. If you're stuck in traffic, use the time to call an old friend and catch up. If you're waiting in line, strike up a conversation with someone else waiting. If the crowds are rattling your nerves, take the opportunity to notice the sights and sounds around you. Take deep breaths and try to relax, accept that this is an inevitable part of the season but only a temporary inconvenience.

7. I have too many parties! The holiday season is packed with cookie exchanges, work parties, and school plays. It can be entirely overstimulating. Remember that it's okay to say "no" to some things. Choose wisely. Don't spend your time at a party with people whose company you don't really enjoy when you could be home with your family or making a dent in your holiday shopping. Friends and family will understand if you can't attend every social gathering.

8. I'm exhausted! The late-night parties, alcohol, and over-indulgence in holiday sweets can leave you feeling tired, sluggish, and guilty. Make a pledge to have a fun but healthy holiday season. Be sure to get plenty of rest during this stressful time. Be mindful of your alcohol consumption. Watch the carbs — have one cookie instead of three, don't go back for a second helping of mashed potatoes and gravy. And, as best you can, try to maintain an exercise schedule during these busy months. Take the time to take care of yourself and you'll have more energy to enjoy all that the holidays have to offer.

9. I haven't accomplished anything this year! As the New Year gets closer, we begin to take stock of the past months and may feel down over unmet goals. Perhaps you didn't lose the weight or didn't get that promotion at work or the garage remains a mess or your files are disorganized.

It's great to set goals for yourself, but they are not always met within the timeframe we had hoped. Rather than feeling down about what you didn't do last year, take this time to re-evaluate. Why didn't these things get done? Are these goals still important to you? If so, what could you do differently in the New Year to meet them? Regroup and reenergize by focusing on the future, not ruminating on the past.

10. It's just too much. If you find that you just can't cope with your anxiety or sadness, be sure to get the help you need. The holidays can be a very difficult time. If you are feeling overwhelmed by your feelings, talk to your doctor or find a mental health professional. This is the time to make resolutions for the New Year and now is the perfect time to address any issues with anxiety or depression that have been plaguing you. If you need assistance finding a mental health provider, talk to your doctor, start by looking at the find-a-therapist section on this website.

Best wishes for a peaceful and joyous holiday season and a calm and happy New Year!

Mindfulness of the Breath – script by Russ Harris,

www.imlearningact.com

Therapist: I invite you to sit with your feet flat on the floor and your back straight, and either fix your eyes on a spot or close your eyes. Bring your attention to your breathing, and observe it as if you're a curious scientist who has never encountered breathing before. (Pause 5 seconds.) Notice the air as it comes in through your nostrils ... and goes down to the bottom of your lungs. (Pause 5 seconds.) And notice it as it flows back out again. (Pause 5 seconds.) Notice the air moving in and out of your nostrils ... how it's slightly warmer as it comes out ... and slightly cooler as it goes in. Notice the subtle rise and fall of your shoulders ... (Pause 5 seconds.) and the gentle rise and fall of your rib cage ... (Pause 5 seconds.) and the soothing rise and fall of your abdomen. (Pause 5 seconds.) Fix your attention on one of these areas, whichever you prefer: on the breath moving in and out of the nostrils, on the rising and falling of the rib cage, or the abdomen. (Pause 5 seconds.) Keep your attention on this spot, noticing the movement—in and out—of the breath. (Pause 20 seconds.) Whatever feelings, urges, or sensations arise, whether pleasant or unpleasant, gently acknowledge them, as if nodding your head at people passing by you on the street. (Pause 5 seconds.) Gently acknowledge their presence and let them be. (Pause 5 seconds.) Allow them to come and go as they please, and keep your attention on the breath. (Pause 20 seconds.) Whatever thoughts, images, or memories arise, whether comfortable or uncomfortable, simply acknowledge them and allow them to be ... Let them come and go as they please, and keep your attention on the breath. (Pause 20 seconds.) From time to time, your attention will wander as you get caught up in your thoughts. Each time this happens, notice what distracted you, then bring your attention back to the breath. (Pause 20 seconds.) No matter how often you drift off, whether a hundred times or a thousand—your aim is simply to note what distracted you and to refocus on your breath. (Pause 10 seconds.) Again and again and again, you'll drift off into your thoughts. This is normal and natural and happens to everyone. Our minds naturally distract us from what we're doing. So each time you realize your attention has wandered, gently acknowledge it, notice what distracted you, and

return your attention to the breath. (Pause 20 seconds.) If frustration, boredom, anxiety, impatience, or other feelings arise, simply acknowledge them, and maintain your focus on the breath. (Pause 20 seconds.) No matter how often your attention wanders, gently acknowledge it, note what distracted you, and then refocus on your breath. (Pause 10 seconds.) And when you are ready, bring yourself back to the room and open your eyes.

Deep Breathing



Deep Breathing: a relaxation technique performed by purposefully taking slow, deep breaths. When practiced regularly, deep breathing provides both immediate and long-term relief from stress and anxiety.

How Deep Breathing Works

During periods of anxiety, the body triggers a set of symptoms called the **stress response**. Breathing becomes shallow and rapid, heart rate increases, and muscles become tense. In opposition to the stress response is the **relaxation response**. Breathing becomes deeper and slower, and the symptoms of anxiety fade away. Deep breathing triggers this response.

Instructions

Sit back or lie down in a comfortable position. Close your eyes, if you would like to do so. When you're learning, try placing a hand on your stomach. If you breathe deeply enough, you should notice it rising and falling with each inhalation and exhalation.



- 1 Inhale.** Breathe in slowly through your nose for 4 seconds.
- 2 Pause.** Hold the air in your lungs for 4 seconds.
- 3 Exhale.** Breathe out slowly through your mouth for 6 seconds.
Tip: Pucker your lips, as if you are blowing through a straw, to slow your exhalation.
- 4 Repeat.** Practice for at least 2 minutes, but preferably 5 to 10 minutes.

Tips

- If it isn't working, *slow down!* The most common mistake is breathing too fast. Time each step in your head, counting slowly as you do so.
- Counting out your breaths serves a second purpose. It takes your mind off the source of your anxiety. Whenever you catch your mind wandering, simply return your focus to counting.
- The times we use for each step are suggestions, and can be lengthened or decreased. Lengthen the time if it feels natural to do so, or decrease the time if you feel discomfort.

progressive muscle relaxation

One of the body's reactions to fear and anxiety is muscle tension. This can result in feeling "tense", or can lead to muscle aches and pains, as well as leaving some people feeling exhausted. Think about how you respond to anxiety. Do you "tense up" when you're feeling anxious? Muscle relaxation can be particularly helpful in cases where anxiety is especially associated with muscle tension. This information sheet will guide you through a common form of relaxation designed to reduce muscle tension.

Muscle tension

Muscle tension is commonly associated with stress, anxiety and fear as part of a process that helps our bodies prepare for potentially dangerous situations. Even though some of those situations may not actually be dangerous, our bodies respond in the same way. Sometimes we don't even notice how our muscles become tense, but perhaps you clench your teeth slightly so your jaw feels tight, or maybe your shoulders become. Muscle tension can also be associated with backaches and tension headaches.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

One method of reducing muscle tension that people have found helpful is through a technique called Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR). In progressive muscle relaxation exercises, you tense up particular muscles and then relax them, and then you practise this technique consistently.

preparing for relaxation

When you are beginning to practice progressive muscle relaxation exercises keep in mind the following points.

- **Physical injuries.** If you have any injuries, or a history of physical problems that may cause muscle pain, always consult your doctor before you start.
- **Select your surroundings.** Minimise the distraction to your five senses. Such as turning off the TV and radio, and using soft lighting.
- **Make yourself comfortable.** Use a chair that comfortably seats your body, including your head. Wear loose clothing, and take off your shoes.
- **Internal mechanics.** Avoid practicing after big, heavy meals, and do not practice after consuming any intoxicants, such as alcohol.

general procedure

- 1 Once you've set aside the time and place for relaxation, slow down your breathing and give yourself permission to relax.
- 2 When you are ready to begin, tense the muscle group described. Make sure you can feel the tension, but not so much that you feel a great deal of pain. Keep the muscle tensed for approximately 5 seconds.
- 3 Relax the muscles and keep it relaxed for approximately 10 seconds. It may be helpful to say something like "Relax" as you relax the muscle.
- 4 When you have finished the relaxation procedure, remain seated for a few moments allowing yourself to become alert.

Relaxation sequence

1. **Right hand and forearm.** Make a fist with your right hand.
2. **Right upper arm.** Bring your right forearm up to your shoulder to "make a muscle".
3. **Left hand and forearm.**
4. **Left upper arm.**
5. **Forehead.** Raise your eyebrows as high as they will go, as though you were surprised by something.
6. **Eyes and cheeks.** Squeeze your eyes tight shut.
7. **Mouth and jaw.** Open your mouth as wide as you can, as you might when you're yawning.
8. **Neck. !!!** Be careful as you tense these muscles. Face forward and then pull your head back slowly, as though you are looking up to the ceiling.
9. **Shoulders.** Tense the muscles in your shoulders as you bring your shoulders up towards your ears.
10. **Shoulder blades/Back.** Push your shoulder blades back, trying to almost touch them together, so that your chest is pushed forward.
11. **Chest and stomach.** Breathe in deeply, filling up your lungs and chest with air.
12. **Hips and buttocks.** Squeeze your buttock muscles
13. **Right upper leg.** Tighten your right thigh.
14. **Right lower leg. !!!** Do this slowly and carefully to avoid cramps. Pull your toes towards you to stretch the calf muscle.
15. **Right foot.** Curl your toes downwards.
16. **Left upper leg.** Repeat as for right upper leg.
17. **Left lower leg.** Repeat as for right lower leg.
18. **Left foot.** Repeat as for right foot.

Practice means progress. Only through practice can you become more aware of your muscles, how they respond with tension, and how you can relax them. Training your body to respond differently to stress is like any training – practising consistently is the key.



sleep hygiene

What is Sleep Hygiene?

'Sleep hygiene' is the term used to describe good sleep habits. Considerable research has gone into developing a set of guidelines and tips which are designed to enhance good sleeping, and there is much evidence to suggest that these strategies can provide long-term solutions to sleep difficulties.

There are many medications which are used to treat insomnia, but these tend to be only effective in the short-term. Ongoing use of sleeping pills may lead to dependence and interfere with developing good sleep habits independent of medication, thereby prolonging sleep difficulties. Talk to your health professional about what is right for you, but we recommend good sleep hygiene as an important part of treating insomnia, either with other strategies such as medication or cognitive therapy or alone.

Sleep Hygiene Tips

- 1) **Get regular.** One of the best ways to train your body to sleep well is to go to bed and get up at more or less the same time every day, even on weekends and days off! This regular rhythm will make you feel better and will give your body something to work from.
- 2) **Sleep when sleepy.** Only try to sleep when you actually feel tired or sleepy, rather than spending too much time awake in bed.
- 3) **Get up & try again.** If you haven't been able to get to sleep after about 20 minutes or more, get up and do something calming or boring until you feel sleepy, then return to bed and try again. Sit quietly on the couch with the lights off (bright light will tell your brain that it is time to wake up), or read something boring like the phone book. Avoid doing anything that is too stimulating or interesting, as this will wake you up even more.
- 4) **Avoid caffeine & nicotine.** It is best to avoid consuming any caffeine (in coffee, tea, cola drinks, chocolate, and some medications) or nicotine (cigarettes) for at least 4-6 hours before going to bed. These substances act as stimulants and interfere with the ability to fall asleep.
- 5) **Avoid alcohol.** It is also best to avoid alcohol for at least 4-6 hours before going to bed. Many people believe that alcohol is relaxing and helps them to get to sleep at first, but it actually interrupts the quality of sleep.
- 6) **Bed is for sleeping.** Try not to use your bed for anything other than sleeping and sex, so that your body comes to associate bed with sleep. If you use bed as a place to watch TV, eat, read, work on your laptop, pay bills, and other things, your body will not learn this connection.



- 7) **No naps.** It is best to avoid taking naps during the day, to make sure that you are tired at bedtime. If you can't make it through the day without a nap, make sure it is for less than an hour and before 3pm.
- 8) **Sleep rituals.** You can develop your own rituals of things to remind your body that it is time to sleep - some people find it useful to do relaxing stretches or breathing exercises for 15 minutes before bed each night, or sit calmly with a cup of caffeine-free tea.
- 9) **Bathtime.** Having a hot bath 1-2 hours before bedtime can be useful, as it will raise your body temperature, causing you to feel sleepy as your body temperature drops again. Research shows that sleepiness is associated with a drop in body temperature.
- 10) **No clock-watching.** Many people who struggle with sleep tend to watch the clock too much. Frequently checking the clock during the night can wake you up (especially if you turn on the light to read the time) and reinforces negative thoughts such as "Oh no, look how late it is, I'll never get to sleep" or "it's so early, I have only slept for 5 hours, this is terrible."
- 11) **Use a sleep diary.** This worksheet can be a useful way of making sure you have the right facts about your sleep, rather than making assumptions. Because a diary involves watching the clock (see point 10) it is a good idea to only use it for two weeks to get an idea of what is going and then perhaps two months down the track to see how you are progressing.
- 12) **Exercise.** Regular exercise is a good idea to help with good sleep, but try not to do strenuous exercise in the 4 hours before bedtime. Morning walks are a great way to start the day feeling refreshed!
- 13) **Eat right.** A healthy, balanced diet will help you to sleep well, but timing is important. Some people find that a very empty stomach at bedtime is distracting, so it can be useful to have a light snack, but a heavy meal soon before bed can also interrupt sleep. Some people recommend a warm glass of milk, which contains tryptophan, which acts as a natural sleep inducer.
- 14) **The right space.** It is very important that your bed and bedroom are quiet and comfortable for sleeping. A cooler room with enough blankets to stay warm is best, and make sure you have curtains or an eyemask to block out early morning light and earplugs if there is noise outside your room.
- 15) **Keep daytime routine the same.** Even if you have a bad night sleep and are tired it is important that you try to keep your daytime activities the same as you had planned. That is, don't avoid activities because you feel tired. This can reinforce the insomnia.



6 Ways of Saying “NO”

1. The Direct ‘no’. When someone asks you to do something you don't want to do, say 'no' without apologising. The other person has the problem, but you do not have to allow him or her to pass it on to you. This technique can be quite forceful and can be effective with salespeople.
2. The reflecting ‘no’. This technique involves acknowledging the content and feeling of the request, then adding your assertive refusal at the end. For example: “I know you want to talk to me about organizing the annual department review, but I can't do lunch today”. Or “I know you're looking forward to a walk this afternoon, but I can't come”.
3. The reasoned “no”. In this technique you give a very brief and genuine reason for why you are saying “No”. For example: “I can't have lunch with you because I have a report that needs to be finished by tomorrow”.
4. The rain check “no”. This is not a definite “no”. It is a way of saying “no” to the request at the present moment but leaves room for saying “Yes” in the future. Only use it if you genuinely want to meet the request. For example: “I can't have lunch with you today, but I could make it sometime next week”.
5. The enquiring “no”. As with the rain check “no” this is not a definite “no”. It is a way of opening up the request to see if there is another way it could be met. For example: “Is there any other time you'd like to go?”
6. The broken record “no”. This can be used in a wide range of situations. You just repeat the simple statement of refusal over and over again. No explanation just repeat it. It is particularly good for persistent requests (Source: Dr. Trevor Powell, Psychologist)

64 Tips for Coping with Grief at the Holidays

1. Acknowledge that the holidays will be different and they will be tough.
2. Decide which traditions you want to keep.
3. Decide which traditions you want to change.
4. Create a new tradition in memory of your loved one.
5. Decide where you want to spend the holidays – you may want to switch up the location, or it may be of comfort to keep it the same. Either way, make a conscious decision about location.
6. Plan ahead and communicate with the people you will spend the holiday with in advance, to make sure everyone is in agreement about traditions and plans.
7. Remember that not everyone will be grieving the same way you are grieving.
8. Remember that the way others will want to spend the holiday may not match how you want to spend the holiday.
9. Put out a 'memory stocking', 'memory box', or other special place where you and others can write down memories you treasure. Pick a time to read them together.
10. Light a candle in your home in memory of the person you've lost.
11. Include one of your loved one's favorite dishes in your holiday meal.
12. Be honest. Tell people what you DO want to do for the holidays and what you DON'T want to do.
13. Make a donation to a charity that was important to your loved one in their name.
14. Buy a gift you would have given to your loved one and donate it to a local charity.
15. If you are feeling really ambitious, adopt a family in memory of your loved one. This can often be done through a church, salvation army, or good will.
16. See a counselor. Maybe you've been putting it off. The holidays are especially tough, so this may be the time to talk to someone.
17. Pick a few special items that belonged to your loved one and gift them to friends or family who will appreciate them.
18. Make a memorial ornament, wreath, or other decoration in honor of your loved one.
19. If you have been having a hard time parting with your loved one's clothing, use the holidays as an opportunity to donate some items to a homeless shelter or other charity.
20. Send a holiday card to friends of your loved one who you may regret having lost touch with.
21. Visit your loved one's gravesite and leave a grave blanket, wreath, poinsettia, or other meaningful holiday item.
22. Play your loved one's favorite holiday music.
23. If your loved one hated holiday music, that's okay! Play whatever music they loved.
24. Journal when you are having an especially bad day.
25. Skip holiday events if you are in holiday overload.
26. Don't feel guilty about skipping events if you are in holiday overload!
27. Don't get trapped. When you go to holiday events, drive yourself so you can leave if it gets to be too much.
28. Pull out old photo albums and spend some time on the holiday looking at photos.
29. Talk to kids about the holidays – it can be confusing for kids that the holidays can be both happy and sad after a death. Let them know it is okay to enjoy the holiday, and it is okay to be sad.

64 Tips for Coping with Grief at the Holidays

30. Make a dish that your loved one used to make. Don't get discouraged if you try to make their dish and you fail. We've all been there (or, at least I've been there!).
31. Leave an empty seat at the holiday table in memory of your loved one.
32. If leaving an empty seat is too depressing, invite someone who doesn't have family to spend the holiday with.
33. Don't send holiday cards this year if it is too sad or overwhelming.
34. Don't feel guilty about not sending holiday cards!
35. Create a 'dear photograph', with a photo of a holiday past.
36. Skip or minimize gifts. After a death, material things can seem less meaningful and the mall can seem especially stressful. Talk as a family and decide whether you truly want to exchange gifts this year.
37. Put out a photo table with photos of your loved one at holiday celebrations in the past.
38. Go to a grief group. When everyone looks so gosh-darn filled with holiday cheer, sometimes it is helpful to talk with others who are struggling.
39. Skip (or minimize) the decorations if they are too much this year. Don't worry, you'll see plenty of decorations outside your house.
40. Don't feel guilty if you skip or minimize the decorations!
41. Remember that crying is okay. The holidays are everywhere and who knows what may trigger a cry-fest. We've all been there and it is okay to cry (even if you are in the sock aisle at Target).
42. Volunteer in your loved one's memory.
43. Let your perfectionism go. If you always have the perfect tree, perfectly wrapped gifts, and perfect table, accept that this year may not be perfect and that is a-okay. I know this is easier said than done for you type-As, but give it a try.
44. Ignore people who want to tell you what you "should" do for the holiday. Listen to yourself, trust yourself, communicate with your family, and do what works for you.
45. Seek gratitude. I am the queen of holiday funks, so I know this is tough. But try to find one daily gratitude throughout the holiday season. Write it down, photograph it, share it on facebook. Whatever. Just look for the little things. Here are some tips if you're struggling with it.
46. Watch the food. Food can make us feel better in the short term (damn you, dopamine!) until we feel like crap later that we ate that whole tin of holiday cookies. Don't deprive yourself, but be careful that you don't let food become your holiday comfort.
47. Watch the booze. Alcohol can become a fast friend when we are grieving. If that holiday party is getting to be too much, head home instead of to the open bar.
48. If you are stressed about making the holiday dinner, ask someone else to cook or buy dinner this year.
49. If you are stressed about the crowds at the mall, cut back on gifts or do your shopping online.
50. Splurge on a gift for you. Grief can make us feel a little entitled and self-involved, and that is okay sometimes (within reason, of course). Splurge on a holiday gift for yourself this year, and make it a good one!
51. Say yes to help. There will be people who want to help and may offer their support. Take them up on their offers.

64 Tips for Coping with Grief at the Holidays

52. Ask for help. If people aren't offering, ask. This can be super-hard if it isn't your style, but it is important. Asking others to help with cooking, shopping, or decorating can be a big relief.
53. Have a moment of silence during your holiday prayer or toast in memory of your loved one.
54. Donate a holiday meal to a family in need through a local church, salvation army, or department of social services.
55. Identify the people who will be able to help and support you during the holidays and identify who may cause you more stress. Try to spend more time with the former group and less with the latter.
56. Make some quiet time for yourself. The holidays can be hectic, make quiet time for yourself to journal, meditate, listen to music, etc.
57. Practice self-care. I know, how cliché. But it is true – whatever it is that helps you recharge, do it. You can find some self-care tips [here](#).
58. Support kids by doing a memorial grief activity together.
59. Donate altar flowers or other holiday decorations at your place of worship in memory of your loved one.
60. Prioritize and don't overcommit. When the holidays are filled with so many parties, dinners, and events, save your energy for those that are most important. Look at everything you have to do and rank them in order of importance. Plan for the most important and skip the rest.
61. Make a list and check it twice. Grief makes it harder for us to concentrate and remember things. When you have a lot going on at the holidays, make a list even if you aren't usually a list-maker, and write things on the calendar.
62. Skip it. Really. If you just can't face the holiday it is okay to take a break this year. Before you get to this extreme, consider if you could just simplify your holiday. If you do skip, still make a plan. Decide if you will still see friends or family, go see a new movie, or make another plan.
63. Enjoy yourself! The holidays will be tough, but there will also be love and joy.
64. Remember, it is okay to be happy – this doesn't diminish how much you love and miss the person who isn't there this holiday. Don't feel guilty for the joy you do find this holiday season.



THE LAST range ON EARTH

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"Honor the gift of food."

—Northwest Coast
Indian proverb and WIN
the Rockies¹ and WIN
Wyoming⁴ principle

FOCUS
ON
HEALTH,
NOT
WEIGHT

An activity to teach mindful eating

Why is mindful eating important?

Experts agree that **what** we eat greatly affects our health. But what about **how** we eat? Do we think about our food while we eat it, or, too often, do we eat while we drive, type on a keyboard, read a book, watch TV, or play a computer game? Based on research from the WIN the Rockies project¹, eating while doing something else increases the chances of a person gaining excess weight², but regardless of how much we weigh, this distracted or mindless eating is an unhealthy habit.

This handout describes an activity that can help educators teach adults and youths – all of us – to become more mindful when we eat. Mindful eating is an important part of having a healthy lifestyle, and we need a healthy lifestyle to achieve a healthy weight³.

Especially for educators

If you have been looking for a way to teach other people about mindful eating, this activity is designed with you in mind!

Learner objectives

As a result of this experience and taking time to actively see, smell, feel, and taste an orange while they eat it, participants will

- Recognize the importance of taking time to enjoy the food they eat.
- Value food as more than something to fill them up.
- Appreciate that an ordinary food can be uniquely satisfying.

These perspectives and skills can help people eat more mindfully.

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What you will need

- Washed oranges, one for each participant. If oranges are too expensive, people can share.
- Paper towels or napkins.
- Paring knife for each participant. **Note:** If working with youths, sturdy plastic knives may be more appropriate.



Participant steps — Guidance to give your participants

1. Wash your hands.
2. Admire the color, shape, and texture of the fruit.
3. Oranges grow on trees in warm climates. Close your eyes and imagine where your orange grew. *Can you feel the warm sun? Can you smell the blossoms? Can you see the fruit on the trees?*
4. Open your eyes and smell the orange.
5. Place the orange on a napkin or piece of paper towel. Roll the orange firmly on the table to release the orange essence.
6. Pick up the orange again and smell the essence.
7. Use the knife to make several cuts, just through the peel. Create quarters by first cutting around the fruit and then cutting from top to bottom. **Note:** If working with youths, it may be best to have an adult or older youth make these cuts.
8. Take time to smell the orange again. *Does it smell stronger? Sweeter?*
9. Peel the fruit slowly, taking time to enjoy the aroma, texture, and color.
10. Separate a couple of segments. Examine their inner structure – hundreds of tiny juice-filled sacs.
11. Place a segment in your mouth, close your eyes, and bite down. Pay attention to how the juice bursts into your mouth and fills it with orange flavor.
12. Chew slowly and experience the texture of the membrane. *How is this different than drinking a glass of orange juice?*
13. As you chew slowly, pretend this is the last orange on earth. It's all yours!



Food for thought —

Questions to ask participants to guide discussion and convey other important meanings

Was the orange satisfying? Why or why not?

Do you usually eat an orange in this way?

What would happen if you ate food this way more often?

How often do you eat because you are hungry for food? How much is to fill a need that has nothing to do with food?

Imagine your orange really is the last one on earth, and it's your job to keep the memory of the orange from being lost from the world. Think about what you would say to another person. How would you describe the experience so he/she could appreciate an orange?



"I like this activity. Oranges are so much more than a rich source of vitamin C: The spray that can zing you when you peel it, the essence of orange and the 'fresh' that fills your nose, the juice that covers your fingers as you peel it. . . ."
- Judy Barbe, registered dietitian, Western Dairy Council

Fruit facts⁵

Did you know . . . ?

Botanically speaking, the orange we commonly eat or make into juice is *Citrus sinensis*. The bitter orange, also called Seville, is a different species.

Orange varieties include navel, Pera, Valencia, Hamlin, Moro, and Jaffa.

Orange trees are evergreens that can produce leaves, flowers, and fruit all at the same time.

In addition to being refreshing and delicious, oranges are packed with folate, vitamin C, potassium, fiber, and substances called phytochemicals, which help prevent disease.

History and geography

Oranges may have first grown in China 4,000 years ago.

About 2,000 years ago, oranges began to spread beyond China, probably first to India. They expanded

west to the Mediterranean, where orange trees spread across North Africa into Spain and Portugal.

Columbus carried seeds of orange and lemon trees to the West Indies.

Oranges today

Brazil is the leading orange-producing country in the world, followed by the United States, Mexico, Spain, Italy, China, Egypt, Turkey, Morocco, and Greece.

Florida and California are the leading orange-producing states in the United States. These two states produce nearly 25 **billion** pounds of oranges each year!

There are many ways to say "orange," for example: In Dutch – *sinasappel* (*see-nohs-ap-pel*); Italian – *arancia* (*ah-rah-n-chah*); Spanish – *naranja* (*nah-rah-n-ho*); German – *orange* (*oh-rong-je*).



Orange Peel Bread

Candied orange peel – instructions

Remove the peel from two large or three small oranges and place the peel in a saucepan. Reserve the segments to eat later or use in another recipe. Cover the peels with water, bring to a boil, and boil on high for two to three minutes. Rinse well. Chop fine or pulse in a food processor until pieces are small but not mushy. Add 1 cup sugar and simmer until the mixture is thick, about seven to nine minutes. Cool.

Bread – instructions

1 large egg
¾ cup evaporated skim milk
1 cup white flour
½ cup whole wheat flour
½ cup quick cooking oats
1 ¾ teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon salt
1 cup walnuts or pecans, chopped

In a medium-sized bowl, beat egg until thick and lemon-yellow colored. Add candied orange peel and milk. Mix well and set aside. In a large bowl, combine dry ingredients, including nuts. Add the orange peel mixture to the dry ingredients, using a few swift strokes. Stir just until moistened. Pour into a 5-inch by 9-inch greased bread pan. Bake at 325 for 50 minutes.

This bread keeps well and is more flavorful if it sits a day or so before eating. Also delicious toasted!

Altitude adjustments: This recipe was tested at 5,000 feet. At lower altitudes, you may need to increase the baking powder and/or sugar somewhat.

A downloadable version of this publication is available at www.uwyo.edu/CES/PUBS/MP112-5.pdf.

¹ Wellness IN the Rockies (WIN the Rockies) was a research, intervention, and public service project in Wyoming, Montana, and Idaho, funded 2000–04 by USDA/IFAFS award #0004499. For more information, go to www.uwyo.edu/wintherockies.

² Liebman M., Pelican S., Moore S.A., Holmes B., Wardlaw M.K., Melcher L.M., Raidl M., Wheeler B., Haynes G.W. Dietary intake-, eating behavior-, and physical activity-related determinants of high body mass index in the 2003 Wellness IN the Rockies cross-sectional study. *Nutrition Research*. 2006; 26:111–117.

³ As defined by Joanne Ikeda, retired from the University of California–Berkeley and UC–Berkeley's Center for Weight and Health, "a healthy weight is the weight you achieve when you have a healthy lifestyle." Accordingly, for some people, their healthy weight will be within a so-called "normal" range of Body Mass Index (BMI) while the healthy weight for others will be outside that range. From this perspective, body weight is one important indicator of health, but there are other

important indicators, too. These include blood pressure, levels of fats in the blood (for example, triglycerides and high-density lipoprotein [HDL] and low-density lipoprotein [LDL] cholesterol), fruit and vegetable intakes, frequency and duration of physical activity, etc. Additional publications in the *Focus on Health, Not Weight* series provide information on other aspects of healthy lifestyles related to physical activity, food and eating, and body image.

⁴ WIN Wyoming <www.uwyo.edu/winwyoming>, a network of educators and health educators who embrace a health-focused (versus a weight-focused) approach to well-being was the genesis for the WIN the Rockies project.

⁵ These facts were compiled with information from these sources: "Fun facts about oranges," 2000 fact sheet from Dole Food Company's Nutrition and Health Program, accessed at www.dole5aday.com/FoodService/pdfs/FACTSHEET_Oranges.pdf; and "Orange" in *The Oxford Companion to Food* by Alan Davidson, Oxford University Press, New York, 1999, pp. 558–559.

Resources



211 Alberta Edmonton and Area is here to help you find the right community and Social Service.

You can search for information on:

- Financial and social assistance
- Housing and utility help
- Food assistance and meal programs
- Seniors' services and home care
- Parenting and family programs
- Government program services
- Disability support services
- Volunteer organizations
- Newcomer services
- Mental health support
- And much more...

Phone 211 in Edmonton, Leduc and Parkland County.



Feeling Hopeless? Thinking of suicide? When you're in emotional pain, your thoughts are clouded by that pain. If you are thinking about suicide, you are trying to end that pain. Please do not confuse ending your pain with ending your life. The two are very different!

The Support Network Distress Line is here to help. To talk about your problems or receive support, call 780-482-4357.

For urgent help there is also the Crisis Response Team. Call 780-342-7777.

Do not hesitate to go to your closest emergency room or call 9-1-1.

Emergency Assistance

24 Hour Crisis Services

911 Emergency (if in immediate danger)	911
Adult Community Urgent Services and Stabilization Team	780.342.7777
Children's Mental Health Crisis Line & Response Team	780.427.4491
Distress Line	780.482.4357
First Nations and Inuit Hope For Wellness Helpline	1.855.242.3310
Emergency Income Support Contact Center (ISCC)	780.644.5135
Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton	780.423.4121
Seniors' Abuse Helpline	780.454.8888
Child Abuse Hotline	1.800.387.5437

Information & Support

211 Information and Referral Line (24/7)	211
Mental Health Helpline (24/7)	1.877.303.2642
Addiction Helpline (24/7)	1.866.332.2322
Alberta Supports Center	780.644.9992
Family Violence Information Line (24/7)	780.310.1818
Sage Seniors Association	780.423.5510
Mennonite Centre for Newcomers	780.424.7709

Shelters

WIN House (24/7)	780.479.0058
Women's Emergency Accommodation Centre	780.423.5302
HOPE Mission Emergency Shelter	780.422.2018
HOPE Mission Youth Shelter	780.422.2018
HOPE Mission - Herb Jamieson Centre for Men	780.429.3470
YESS Youth Empowerment & Support Services	780.468.7070
SAGE Safe House (60+years, M/F)	780.702.1520

Resources

Community Resources

Food

WECAN Food Basket Society	780-413-4525
Healthy fresh food for a low fee.	
Food Bank	(Client Services Line) 780-425-4190
www.edmontonsfoodbank.com	

Collective Kitchen & Basic Shelf Program

780-735-3044

Collective Kitchens are a small group of people who come together once or twice a month to cook.

The Basic Shelf Program is a series of 10 weekly workshops where a small group of people are taught how to cook and shop for food on a limited budget.

Counselling/Support

Employee Assistance Program (EAP) or Employee & Family Assistance Plan (EFAP)

Confidential, free or subsidized costs.

15 Free Sessions for First Nations People 1-888-495-6558

Alberta Health Services

Mental Health Intake	780-342-7600
Addictions	780-427-2736

The Mindfulness Institute

Local meditation groups.

www.mindfulnessinstitute.ca

Edmonton Healing Centre for Grief & Loss 780-454-1194
Ext. 224

Groups, sliding fee scale for 1:1 counselling.

City of Edmonton 780-496-4777

1:1 Counselling, Groups, Family Violence Support.

Educational Psychology Dept. at U of A 780-492-3746

Low fee for school year length support.

Family Center

1:1 Family, and Couples Counselling, Groups, 780-900-5934

PCN Resources

Anxiety and Depression Group

6 week CBT course for depression and anxiety.

Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy for Depression

8 week course for depression.

Craving Change™

3 week course on emotional eating.

Other Themed Workshops

Two-hour CBT courses on the following topics:

- Insomnia
- Coping with Anger
- Effective Communication
- Workplace Stress

Individual Counselling

Short Term 1:1 Counselling, 6-8 bi-weekly sessions.

Free Smartphone Apps

CALM

Head Space

Mood Tools

Mood Gym

Available on the App Store & Google Play store.

Online Resources

The Center for Clinical Interventions

Find a number of free CBT based workbooks.

www.cci.health.wa.gov.au

Listen to audio files for breathing and mindfulness.

www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/Resources/Looking-After-Yourself/Other-Resources

Anxiety Canada

Find resources and information to help with anxiety.

www.anxietycanada.com

Therapist Aid

Free Worksheets

www.therapistaid.com

Deep Breathing Exercise

www.therapistaid.com/therapy-video/deep-breathing-exercise/cbt/none