



Have a Holly Jolly Holiday Season....

It's November already and it seems that the holiday season just sprung up out of nowhere! The stores were already adorned with Christmas décor and gift bundles the day after Halloween. With the world in auto pilot fast forward, it is most important that we remember to slow down, pause and take a deep breath. Before we get caught up in the busyness of the holiday season, let's get our self-care emergency kit together.



ENERGY FLOWS WHERE
INTENTION GOES
CREATE YOUR DAY

Set Intentions & Time to Reflect

Your daily intention can be something pretty general, or perhaps tailored to a certain commitment or challenge on your path that day. When you set your intention, say it as though it were already true. For instance, rather than “I will try to be present,” try “I am present.” If you will be encountering someone who is maybe a bit *difficult* to deal with, your intention may be something along the lines of, “I am positive and polite to everyone I encounter today.”

Setting an intention first thing in the morning and following through with it for the rest of the day may be easier said than done. To ensure your intention doesn't escape you, in addition to making time to set your intention, schedule time at the end of your day to reflect on how this played out. One effective way to set intentions and reflect on them later is to journal. If you write your intention down, it becomes something tangible that you can see and look at, leaving your brain with a visual to come back to anytime you need.



Break a Sweat!

Staying active during the holidays will not only help keep those extra pounds at bay with the abundance of treats available (looking at you, office potluck cookies), but exercising can also put you in a better mood, creating a more positive and empowered mind state to handle any stress or challenges that may come your way.



Say No to Commitment Overload

Holiday self-care means being honest with yourself, your time, and your commitments. Attending different parties on a weekly basis can be draining physically and mentally – especially if you're traveling a far distance.

This time of year is a wonderful opportunity to connect with people you don't normally have a chance to spend time with, but you have to ask yourself just how much you *can* commit to, which is in itself an act of self-care. When you begin receiving your invitations, consider prioritizing which are most important for you to attend.

Difficult Family Members? Try a New Approach

No family is perfect, and when groups of people gather together, there's always a chance that tension will arise. If you have a holiday self-care routine, you will be more well-equipped to put your best foot forward in these scenarios. Kudos to you!

If you do find yourself in an uncomfortable discussion, use these tips to diffuse the situation:

Listen with the intent to listen – not to respond

Family members disagree from time to time. If a light debate unfolds, it doesn't hurt to listen to someone else's opinion. You can listen without responding, and perhaps take a moment to explain your point of view when the other person has finished speaking. But this doesn't mean you have to try to change the other person's mind.

Consider the source

Sometimes it's best to simply let someone talk and not engage back at all. Whether it's the same uncle who says rude comments every time you see him, or if you know your cousin had a *little* too much to drink before making that insensitive remark, decide whether your response will change anything.

Be honest – but respectful

If someone is entering territory that you're not comfortable talking about, it's okay to change the subject. You could bring the topic of conversation back to them by simply responding with, "I would rather not talk about that right now. I'd much rather talk about you – how are you doing?"

Remove yourself from the situation

When all else fails, it's okay to just walk away.



Make Time for Meditation

Meditation is one of the most accessible tools you can use to reduce stress and stay present at any time of year, so it should have a place in your holiday self-care toolbox, too, whether you're a seasoned meditator or a curious beginner. Schedule time to meditate in the morning before your commitments for the day begin. Even if you've only got two minutes to take a few deep breaths, a little bit goes a long way.

The practice of meditation embodies the belief that what you need to achieve happiness is already inside you – it doesn't come gift-wrapped with a bow or have a 30-day return policy.



Give Back to Those Less Fortunate

The holiday season is an important time to pause and reflect on all the wonderful things we have. And part of holiday self-care means taking care of others and sharing this good fortune.

If your schedule permits, consider donating your time, too. Maybe that's volunteering at a local shelter or soup kitchen, writing letters to send overseas to military members who cannot be home with their families, or teaching a donation-based yoga class and giving the proceeds to a charity of your choice. Giving back to others not only provides someone less fortunate with something they can appreciate, but it will also fill you up and make you feel good.



Allow Yourself Alone Time to Unwind

This holiday self-care tip correlates with commitment overload.

Regardless of your holiday schedule, you are allowed to politely say “no” to invites when you’re feeling overwhelmed or simply not up for it. A lot of social interaction can eventually become exhausting – for some people more than others.

Remember to carve out time to be alone with yourself and appreciate spending quality time fostering the most important relationship of all – the one with yourself. Schedule your alone time like you would any other social event this holiday season!

Caring for myself is NOT self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare.

-Audre Lorde