



## 7 TAKE CARE TIPS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

by Jennifer Antkowiak



With all of its sights and sounds, the holiday season has the power to stir up extremely deep emotions---some good, some not so good. Feeling pressure to be happy for the holidays and keep up with family traditions can greatly add to the strain and stress that many caregivers already feel in some form on a daily basis.

Like so many things, being able to manage your role as a caregiver, so that you can really smile and enjoy the holidays, starts in the mind. Understand and accept that as life changes, it's ok to allow holiday plans to change. In fact, being flexible and embracing the new reality of your life will go a long way to paving the way for a happier, healthier holiday season.

Here are some tips to make it easy for you to take the hassle out of the holidays, and make caring for yourself a priority:

1. **SETTLE YOURSELF DOWN:** Take some time to relax. Close your eyes and focus on taking some nice, deep, even breaths. Just five minutes of quiet can bring you peace.
2. **GET OUT AND GET MOVING:** Just a few minutes of exercise can work wonders to clear your head, lift your spirits, and improve your health. Start by simply walking out the door and keep going, briskly for five minutes... then turn around and head back home. Do that three times a day and you get all the benefits of a thirty minute workout, even though you haven't done thirty minutes at a time.
3. **EAT OFTEN AND EAT WELL:** Stock up on fast, fresh mini-meals that can be eaten on the go. Easy wrap sandwiches, hard-cooked eggs, cooked chicken breasts, yogurt and granola, bananas and peanut butter, and almonds are all great choices to keep you fueled, and filling full longer.
4. **GET ENOUGH SLEEP:** Sleep is serious recovery time for the body and brain. Get at least six hours a night. Keep a little notebook by your bed and write down your worries or things you don't want to forget. Getting them out of your head really helps to pave the way for a more restful night.
5. **GET A SYSTEM:** A cluttered environment causes anxiety and stress. Don't get overwhelmed with the clean-up! Set the timer on your microwave for ten minutes, and look for ten things to throw away or recycle. Organizing in baby steps is less intimidating. You'll feel so much better!
6. **GET A HOBBY:** What makes YOU happy? It's important for your overall wellbeing to make time to do something that you enjoy. Scrapbooking, knitting, or even playing cards or doing a puzzle are all proven stress-busters!
7. **HAVE A LAUGH:** Lighten your mood and lift your spirits with a funny movie, or even old TV and Radio shows. They can be refreshing and fun little escapes.

Best wishes for a happy holiday season! Celebrate with those you love!

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*Jennifer Antkowiak is a KDKA-TV (CBS) News Anchor, Mom, Author, and Caregiving Coach who urges people, "Don't stop caring! Care smarter. Care stronger." Find information and products to help you be calmer and more balanced during this holiday season (and all year long) at [jenniferCares.com](http://jenniferCares.com).*