

# FEELING GOOD

November 2024 | Good news for a happier, healthier you.

## Managing Holiday Stress: Tips for Emotional Resilience

As the holiday season approaches, it's common to experience added stress, which can exacerbate symptoms of mental health conditions like depression, anxiety, or substance use disorders. However, there are effective ways to manage stress and support your mental well-being.

### Acknowledge Your Feelings

It's okay to feel down during the holidays. Recognizing your emotions is the first step in addressing and nurturing them.

### Have a Coping Plan

Develop a plan for when you are feeling stressed, sad, or lonely. This plan may include calling a friend, taking a walk, or watching a favorite movie to help manage stress.

### Practice Self-Care

Set time for activities that recharge you—read a good book, spend time in nature, or meditate. Don't forget to eat a balanced diet, get plenty of sleep, and find time for exercise.

### Connect with Others

If you can't be near loved ones during the holidays, join local groups or schedule regular calls with family and friends to reduce loneliness.

### Support Those in Need

Check in on those who may be struggling—helping others can also boost your own happiness and well-being.

### Be Aware of Seasonal Mood Shifts

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) causes depression as days get shorter, often improving in spring. If you notice these symptoms, consult your healthcare provider.

### Avoid Triggers

For people in recovery, have a plan for navigating social events to avoid alcohol or drug use. It is also important to check in on those who may be struggling with substance use over the holidays.

### Know When to Seek Help

If stress feels overwhelming, reach out for professional support. Help is available.



## November Health Awareness:

Learn more about this month's featured health observances:

- National Family Caregivers Month
- National Family Health History Day
- American Diabetes Month
- Lung Cancer Awareness Month
- National Alzheimer's Awareness Month
- Great American Smokeout
- World Kindness Day
- Home Care & Hospice Month
- Prematurity Awareness Month
- World Diabetes Day
- National Clean Out Your Refrigerator Day
- National Take a Hike Day



## Treat Your Family to a Delicious, Healthy Holiday

While for many the holiday season is a time filled with family gatherings and favorite foods, those who are cooking may be glad to learn meals can be made healthier without sacrificing taste or fun.

Here are hints on how:

### TIP 1:

Swap out ingredients for healthier options—without forgoing flavor. Choosing foods that reduce calories and fat won't make your meal less flavorful. In fact, it's likely that neither you, nor your guests, will taste the difference. Here are some quick and easy food swaps to consider:

- Replace white bread with whole grain or wheat bread or white rice with brown rice.
- Use fat-free or low-fat milk instead of whole milk or cream.
- Cut back the amount of sugar inside dishes by leaving off sweet toppings such as marshmallows or whipped cream.
- Use tub margarine instead of butter, stick margarine or shortening, in baked goods.

### TIP 2:

Keep portion sizes healthy. Family-style meals can often lead to overeating. A dinner table set with platters of food can increase the desire to eat large portions or take seconds. To help control portion sizes:

- Use smaller serving utensils, bowls or platters.
- Serve a buffet-style dinner on a separate table so guests have to get up for seconds.
- Offer take-home containers ahead of time so guests don't feel they have to eat everything "now."
- Encourage larger portions of fruits and vegetables; aim for them to cover half of each person's plate.

### TIP 3:

Create active after-dinner traditions. Instead of napping after a holiday meal, start a new tradition that burns calories and encourages family fun. Try activities like:

- Set up a neighborhood scavenger hunt to encourage your family to find landmarks or hidden items. Motivate your family with a nonfood reward, such as a trophy or ribbon.
- Play a family game of touch football.
- Take a walk after dinner and play an interactive game such as 20 questions on the way.

Source: <http://wecan.nhlbi.nih.gov>.

## Practicing Gratitude for Emotional Balance



**How often do you feel thankful?** Research shows that regularly noticing the good in your life can boost emotional well-being and help manage stress. Gratitude may also benefit your physical health, with studies linking it to fewer signs of heart disease.

Start by reflecting on positive experiences—big or small, like enjoying a good cup of coffee or receiving a friend's support. Take a moment to fully appreciate these experiences and let feelings of gratitude lift your mood.

When you make gratitude a regular habit, it can help you learn to recognize good things in your life despite the bad things that might be happening.

### Gratitude Tips

Create positive emotions by being thankful every day:

- **Take a moment.** Think about the positive things that happened during the day.
- **Journal.** Make a habit of writing down things you're grateful for. Try listing several things.
- **Savor your experiences.** Try to notice positive moments as they are happening.
- **Relive the good times.** Relive positive moments later by thinking about them or sharing them with others.
- **Write to someone.** Write a letter to someone you feel thankful toward. You don't have to send it.
- **Make a visit.** Tell someone you're grateful for them in person.

# 10 Reasons to Get Moving!



- 1. Better mood** - Regular physical activity can quickly ease anxiety and improve sleep, while reducing depression risk over time. Walking boosts mood and joining walking groups strengthens social connections.
- 2. Better brain function** - Regular physical activity can keep your thinking, learning, and judgment skills sharp and delay the decline of these skills as you age.
- 3. More money in your wallet** - Not getting enough physical activity can increase your risk of developing a chronic disease, which comes with higher health care costs. Staying active is good for your health and your wallet, too.
- 4. Lower risk of heart disease and stroke** - Heart disease and stroke are leading causes of death in the U.S. Regular moderate activity can reduce your risk, lower blood pressure, and improve cholesterol levels.
- 5. Lower risk of type 2 diabetes or diabetes complications** - Regular physical activity helps prevent type 2 diabetes. If you already have diabetes (type 1 or type 2), you can help control your blood sugar levels by staying active.
- 6. Lower risk of some cancers** - Getting the recommended amount of physical activity can lower the risk of [many cancers](#). These include cancers of the bladder, breast, colon, endometrium, esophagus, kidney, lung, and stomach.
- 7. Longer life** - Regular physical activity can lower early death risk from major causes like heart disease and diabetes. An extra 10 minutes of moderate exercise daily could prevent about 110,000 deaths per year among U.S. adults 40 and older.
- 8. Stronger bones and muscles** - Doing [aerobic](#), [muscle-strengthening](#), and [bone-strengthening](#) physical activities of at least moderate intensity can slow the loss of bone density. Being physically active can also help with arthritis pain and reduce the risk of hip fracture.
- 9. Fewer sick days** - Physically active people take fewer sick days. Some workplaces offer wellness programs with gyms or walking paths, but you can also stay active on your own with walking meetings, activity breaks, or lunchtime walks.
- 10. Better grades in school** - Physical activity programs can boost kids' focus and academic performance. Active students often have better grades, attendance, and classroom behavior. Make it a [family's daily routine](#) with walks or active games.



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## Pain Coach

Pain Coach is an interactive app that was created for anyone who experiences chronic pain or has any pain that disrupts their life.

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## Safety Plan

The Safety Plan app is here to help you make a plan for dealing with thoughts of suicide and self-harm.

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Anonymous US resources and map locations for **mental** and **substance use** disorder treatment.

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## Insomnia Coach

The Insomnia Coach app was created for everyone to help manage insomnia.

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