

# HOLIDAY WELLNESS STRESS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

**Stress** is the mental and physical state experienced when difficult, scary, or demanding events occur. Stress is interpreted by the brain as a threat to our well-being even if it is a minor irritation (like mall parking). The brain responds to stress by putting the body into survival mode which is a fight, flight, freeze, or fawn response. Stress is an everyday part of life but the demands of the holiday season such as multiple events, increased expenses, high expectations, and added worries regarding the pandemic can crank daily stress levels up significantly making the season feel more dreaded than excitedly anticipated. Reducing stress and learning to calm the stress response once it starts is key to good physical and emotional well-being and having *a good holiday season!*

## 5 Stress Management Strategies

1

**Use Deep Breathing**-- Interrupt or calm the stress response cycle by taking deep and measured breaths. The 4x4 technique is **inhaling** to a count of 4, **pausing** to a count of 4, and **exhaling** to a count of 4.

Google: *Box Breathing Technique*

2

**Plan ahead and Write it Down**-- Think about what could go wrong such as overspending or family conflicts and write down your mitigation strategies **in advance**.

Google: *why you need to write down your goals*

3

**Give Compassion** to Yourself and Others--Recognize that everyone is stressed. When you catch yourself feeling angry or annoyed say to yourself **"may I be happy"** and about the other person think **"may you be happy."**

Google: *benefits of compassion meditation*

4

**Pause for Self-Care**--Build in breaks for self-care which includes periods of doing rest *and* recreation. Do something that **recharges** and makes **you happy**.

Google: *self-care*

5

**Have a Music Playlist** for different moods and **play as needed**. Try "Weightless" by Marconi Union for relaxation.

Google: *benefits of music on mood*

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT STRESS GOOGLE  STRESS RESPONSE CYCLE