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# 5 Tips To Reduce Holidays Stress

**Family, friends, fun, and food: holidays can be the best of times. But they're also stressful times, full of demands and deadlines.**



**Here are 5 tips to help reduce stress during the holiday season and throughout the year from our clinicians at NFSB:**

## **1) UTILIZE TRAFFIC TIME**

We all know traffic is inevitable, but the holiday season seems to amplify the amount of frustrating traffic situations. Though we cannot control the flow of traffic, we can control how we utilize those minutes, and our emotional response. Phone a friend and catch each other up on life (only while using a hand free phone connection). Listen to that book on "tape" you've been dying to read but never have time for. Sing your favorite songs out loud; expression through music may release pent up emotions without addressing them directly.



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### **2) GRATEFUL AND THANKFUL**

Before bed, or before you start your day, bring to mind 5 (or more!) relationships or situations for which you are grateful. Repeat the words "thank you" as you focus on them. See if you can identify in your body where gratitude resides (hint: check in with your heart!) when you visualize those things that bring joy, comfort, peace and love into your life.

### **3) SMARTER DRINKING CHOICES**

Alcohol can lessen inhibitions and induce overeating. And, both alcoholic and some non-alcoholic beverages are often full of sugar. Opt instead for water with citrus garnish for an added dash of Vit C! Challenge yourself to drink two glasses of water for every alcoholic, caffeinated or non-water beverage you consume. The fullness you feel from drinking the water may even discourage you from tempting calorie laden holiday food choices!

### **4) TRADITIONS! TRADITIONS!**

Just because your mother did it, doesn't mean you have to! If there is something that doesn't seem to make you feel connected to your family and brings on more stress, like making that turkey liver stuffing no one seems to eat, STOP! Try to lovingly release those tasks which don't provide peace, happiness and connection and add events or tasks that do! Create your own enjoyable traditions!

### **5) SIT AND BREATHE DELIBERATELY**

Just take some time to sit alone (even 2 minutes will do!). Take notice of your breath. How without effort, it seamlessly feeds your entire body the oxygen it needs to keep on trucking along. Try taking a deep breath in for 4 counts, hold for 4 counts, exhale for 4 counts and hold for 4 counts. This is called the "square breath". Taking a few moments to focus on your breath can increase your mindfulness while doing tasks. Aaaah.... How easy!



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**For more tips on stress reduction, go to:**

[http://www.va.gov/HEALTH/NewsFeatures/2014/December/Seven-Ways-to-  
Manage-Stress-during-the-Holidays.asp](http://www.va.gov/HEALTH/NewsFeatures/2014/December/Seven-Ways-to-Manage-Stress-during-the-Holidays.asp)

[http://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/healthy\\_living/hic Stress Management and  
\\_Emotional Health/hic Managing Holiday Stress](http://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/healthy_living/hic_Stress_Management_and_Emoional_Health/hic_Managing_Holiday_Stress)

[https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/emotional-fitness/201112/10-tools-  
dealing-holiday-stress-and-depression](https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/emotional-fitness/201112/10-tools-dealing-holiday-stress-and-depression)