

WELLNESS MINUTE

December 2019



HOW TO PREVENT
HOLIDAY STRESS &
DEPRESSION

4 WAYS TO SQUEEZE
IN EXERCISE

HEALTHY SALTED
CARAMEL BROWNIES

How to Prevent Holiday Stress & Depression




The holiday season is a time when demands tend to increase, including shopping, cooking, entertaining, attending events, and more. This can spike your stress level, which can get in the way of fully enjoying the festivities. For some, the season can also contribute to feelings of sadness, loneliness, and even depression.

Taking a few steps to anticipate how the holidays tend to affect you, and planning ways to manage the demands and emotions, can help prevent holiday stress and depression.

ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR FEELINGS. If the holidays trigger loneliness, sadness, overwhelm, or any other emotions, avoid repressing them or pretending to be happy when you're not. Allow yourself to feel your emotions (without dwelling on them) and chances are they will pass.

REACH OUT. If you feel lonely or isolated, find community, religious, or social events that you feel comfortable attending or volunteer at to help others in need. This can help build relationships and lift your spirits.

MANAGE YOUR EXPECTATIONS. As families change and grow, traditions can also change. Be open to doing things differently and accept when things don't go exactly as planned or desired. It also helps to accept people as they are instead of focusing on differences or grievances during this season.



CREATE A SPENDING BUDGET AND STICK TO IT. Decide how much you can afford to spend on food and gifts and don't overspend due to social or family pressures. If money is tight, consider homemade gifts or a family gift exchange.

AVOID PROCRASTINATION. Planning and shopping ahead will prevent the stress of buying last-minute gifts.

DON'T FORGET SELF-CARE. It can be tempting to let healthy habits go out the window during this busy time. Do your best to avoid this. Fit in even a few minutes of physical activity. Treat yourself without overindulging. Take just a few minutes a day to do something calming like meditation, deep breathing, journal writing, or practicing gratitude. This can help manage your stress and balance your mood, allowing you to enjoy the season.



Happy Holidays!

Source:

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/expert-answers/2019/09/19>

4 WAYS TO SQUEEZE IN EXERCISE

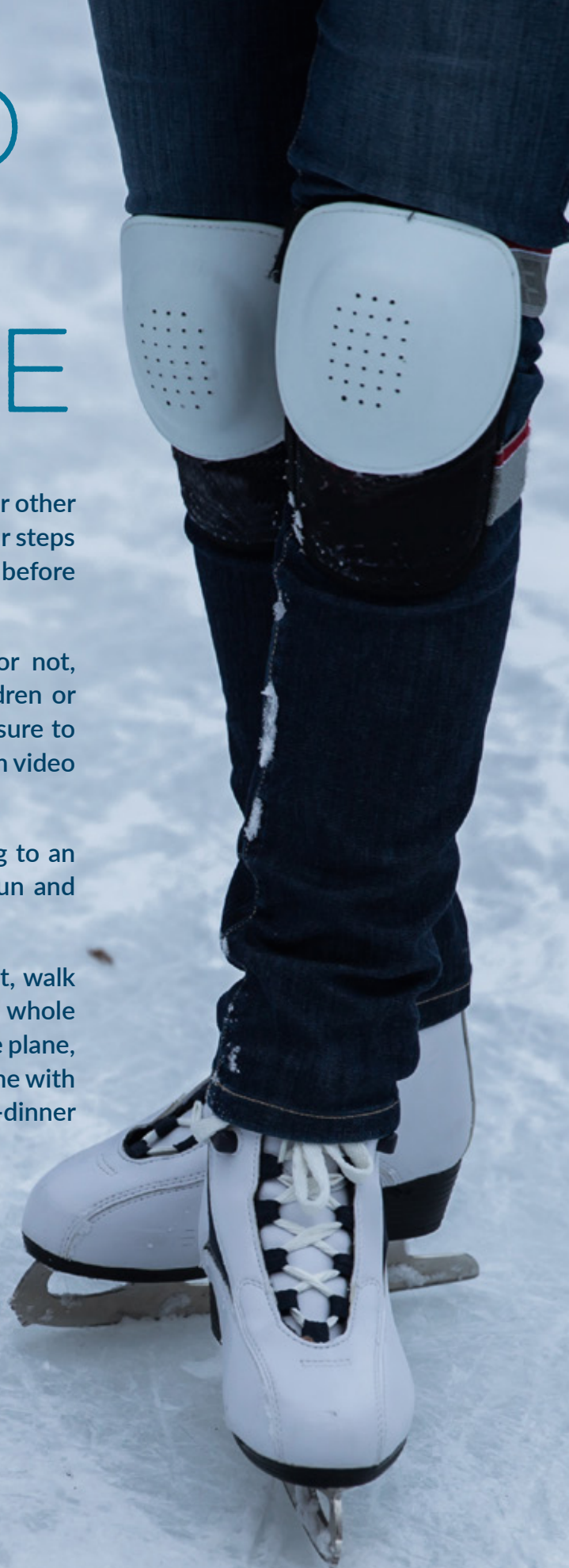
WALK THE MALL. Rather than going directly to find gifts or other purchases, take a lap around the mall first. It will add to your steps and may give you a more complete idea of what's available before you start shopping.

PLAY WITH THE KIDS. Whether you have your own or not, chances are you'll be around nieces, nephews, grandchildren or other kids that you can play with during the holidays. Be sure to do something active; it will also help them take a break from video games or devices and make great memories for everyone.

GO ICE SKATING. Take advantage of the season by going to an ice-skating rink with family or friends. It can be lots of fun and make for great photo ops.

STAY ACTIVE WHILE TRAVELING. If you're taking a flight, walk around the terminal while waiting instead of sitting the whole time. You're already going to be spending time sitting on the plane, why sit more than you have to? If staying at a hotel, book one with a gym or pool. If visiting family, invite them to go on after-dinner walks.

Source:
<https://recipes.howstuffworks.com/menus/10-ways-to-workout-during-holidays1.htm>



Healthy Salted Caramel Brownies

Ingredients:

- 1 cup walnuts
- 1 cup almonds
- ½ cup raw cacao powder
- 1/8 teaspoon sea salt
- 10-12 dates, pitted
- 2 tbsp. coconut oil, melted
- 2 tbsp. maple syrup
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract

CARAMEL TOPPING

- 3 tbsp. almond butter
- 1-2 tbsp. raw honey or maple syrup
- ½ tsp. vanilla extract
- Pinch of sea salt

Directions

Place the walnuts and almonds in a food processor and pulse until finely chopped.

Add the cacao and salt and pulse to combine. With the food processor running, add the dates one at a time until they are combined. Add the coconut oil, maple syrup and vanilla.

Line an 8x8 baking pan with parchment paper and place the brownie mix in the pan. Press down to form an even layer.

To make the caramel topping, whisk together the ingredients in a small bowl. Drizzle some of the caramel topping over the brownies and place the pan in the refrigerator for 2-3 hours to set.

Cut into squares and enjoy!

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PREVENTING HOLIDAY WEIGHT GAIN

Overindulging on holiday foods and not sticking to an exercise routine will set anyone up for weight gain. I'm sure you've noticed how gym attendance increases in January. Don't want to be that person? Here are four tips that can help.

Avoid skipping meals. Arriving famished to a holiday party is a recipe for overeating and making unhealthy food choices. Consider eating a healthy snack before going.

Be selective about treats. Whether it's Christmas cookies, your aunt's delicious cake, or some other favorite holiday recipe, focus on treating yourself with the foods that you don't tend to have all year rather than overindulging on everything that's available.

Stay active. There are plenty of small ways to increase physical activity, such as parking further away, taking the stairs, and getting up a few minutes early to exercise. See "4 Ways to Squeeze in Exercise" for more ideas.

Stay hydrated. Be sure to drink plenty of water since that can help manage your appetite and maintain your energy. On the other hand, limit alcoholic drinks since they can add lots of calories.

Focus on family and friends. Connecting with loved ones is what it's all about. Be present with the people around you and have a good time!

