

The Balancing Act

Tips to Balance Your Life and Keep You Emotionally and Physically Fit



'Tis the Season To Feel Blue?

Fatigue, unrealistic expectations and family battles: during the holidays any one of these can seep in, sabotaging your comfort and joy and leaving you uninterested, if not down, about the season. Discover new ways to beat the blues and revel in the festivities (flaws and all) with the following holiday hints.

Launch a double offensive on the winter blahs by getting out and getting physically active.

Step outside.

If you're feeling more melancholy than merry, you might benefit from getting outdoors and exercising. For many people, indoor 'hibernation' during the winter months—and the lack of sunlight exposure that goes with it—can drag your mood and spirits down. Launch a double offensive on the winter blahs by getting out and getting physically active. Bundle up, brave the outdoors and get moving by taking a walk on your lunch break, ice skating at an outside rink or hitting the ski or snowshoe trails

at the weekend. Exercise not only helps your body stay healthy and trim, but, studies suggest, can also be as effective as in easing some symptoms of mild to moderate depression.

Keep it real.

Unrealistic expectations of a perfect holiday season full of family harmony and bliss are truly a dream for most people. Chances are your bossy father-in-law or lippy teen *aren't* going to magically change overnight. Avoid disappointment by accepting the imperfections of your family dynamic and staying focused on the positive aspects.

Get some sleep.

Amidst the parties, shopping and preparations, sleep may be taking a back seat. But burning the candle at both ends can cause you to overindulge on those high-calorie hors d'oeuvres (resulting in a thicker waistline), and may leave you stressed and too tired to effectively handle the physical and emotional demands of the holiday season. Try getting seven to eight hours of sleep nightly. Impossible? Become an expert in the fine art of napping—which can boost brain function, mood and performance—with a quick 20-30 minute snooze during the day.

Ease up on the alcohol.

The 'seasonal sauce' is not only loaded with empty calories, but can interfere with the quality of your sleep and, as a well-known depressant, can drag your mood down too. If you do indulge at a party or dinner, limit your alcohol intake and then switch to water—which will also help you stay hydrated.

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Stick to your budget.

A holiday spending spree you can't afford can lead to stressful financial hangovers in January (also known as post-party blues month). Set a realistic budget for gifts, entertainment, etc. and then stick to it. And when you get the urge to overspend, remind yourself that the holidays are about the thought, not material gifts.

Seek out support

If you're having trouble functioning at home or at work, you may be suffering from clinical depression, Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) or another condition. Consult your physician or EAP if you notice drastic changes in your eating and sleeping routines, mood, energy level, ability to concentrate or if you experience feelings of profound helplessness, sadness or emptiness.



For most people, the fantasy of a picture-perfect holiday is just that: fantasy. The reality is a lot more complicated than everyone happily gathering around the dinner table or partying merrily until the wee hours. Though it's not always possible to have a 'flawless' holiday, by staying active, rested and realistic, you can do your best to enjoy a perfectly *imperfect* season.

Want to find out more about how your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) can help you beat the holiday blues? Call your EAP at 1.800.387.4765 for service in English, 1.800.361.5676 for service in French, to find out more about the variety of support services available to you.

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