

Tips to help you deal with holiday stress

(NC) Planning, preparing, shopping and over-scheduling can leave even the best of us feeling overwhelmed. But did you know that even seasonal stress can have serious implications on your health? It can suppress our entire immune system and increase cortisol levels, which makes us more susceptible to becoming sick.

One effective and scientifically proven way to tackle stress is through a mindfulness practice. Studies show that being more mindful has many positive effects, including reduced inflammation and lower levels of stress hormones. Here are some quick ways to incorporate mindfulness into your holiday activities, recommended by the experts at the Canadian Health Food Association.

Focus on your breath. Mindfulness can be easily included in your daily routine by simply paying attention to your breathing, tuning into your body's physical sensations and practising mindful meditation. Paying attention to breathing in and out, without any need for



your breath to be long or short, can be applied to whatever you're doing, whether it's cooking, cleaning, wrapping gifts or decorating your home. Just bring your attention lightly but completely to the activity you're engaged in.

Enjoy nature. Go to a place where you can enjoy the scenery and take a walk. Going out to appreciate the beauty of the outdoors while slowing down to look at the trees and the newly fallen snow will help boost your mood, and getting into a quiet space can improve your sense of well-being. Whether it's the local park or even your own backyard, all that matters is that you're outside.

Treat yourself. Do something fun and relaxing for yourself. Your personal time is vital to your mental and emotional well-being, giving you time to reflect and appreciate the important things. So, give yourself a present, whether it's enjoying a quiet weekend away or indulging in a delicious home-cooked dinner for one.

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