

25 WAYS TO MANAGE STRESS DURING THE HOLIDAYS



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by ChronicBabe



Thanks! Thanks for being awesome. Thanks for being part of the ChronicBabe community. Thanks for always offering your fave tips for us to share. XO!

Holidays aren't all bright lights and parties. These 25 stress-busters bring back the joy.

**by Michelle Pizzo
& Jenni Prokopy**

The holidays. They bring with them so much fun, joy, entertainment, surprise, generosity, contemplation, and did we mention FUN?

But they also bring with them lots of stress, exhaustion, busy-ness, family drama, crazy eating habits, late nights, too many errands, pressure to

be perfect, and did we mention STRESS?

Whether or not you're a ChronicBabe, you're no doubt affected by the stress of the holiday season. That's why we developed these 25 stress-busting practices to help you enjoy the season *so much more*.

They include some really basic ideas; try to calm your mind and re-embrace

them even if they don't seem new. They include some radical ideas; try to calm your mind and prepare for potential awesomeness.

Have a suggestion? Another stress-buster? Visit ChronicBabe.com and let us know.

Team ChronicBabe thanks YOU. You rock! XO!
- Jenni & Michelle

1. Remember: they're your family and you wouldn't be who you are without them.
2. You know the saying, "you can't choose your family, but you can choose your friends," so invite them over to help you out and blow off some steam.
3. Find ways to laugh at yourself, and at your family. Believe us, there are a million things that can be funny (and without being hurtful to others). Laughter TRULY is the best medicine.
4. Plan ahead. Have a checklist, maybe even a couple weeks in advance. Sometimes multiple checklists can help make you feel less stressed. It also helps when someone offers assistance, because you can clearly see what still needs to be done.
Checklists can include house chores, cooking, decorating, self-care, and daily or holiday errands. Don't forget non-holiday related things still need to get done, too.



Sometimes it helps to focus on the ridiculous. When things get serious, we can defuse the situation with a laugh. So keep a few funny pics, songs, jokes and other material on hand. You know, like a light-up flamingo wearing a santa hat.

5. Try to keep positive energy flowing. Make it an exercise every day for at least five minutes to think about the things that make you happy and that you appreciate in yourself and in others.
6. After recognizing the things that calm you down and make you happy, implement them throughout the planning or preparing process. For example, music calms us

down, so when we get stressed we turn on some tunes, even if it's just for soft background noise. Singing helps release some tension too! :)

7. Remember: mistakes happen, life isn't perfect, and there are some surprises you just can't anticipate. Roll with the punches and accept that these surprises make each year/holiday/get-together unique.



One of Editrix Jenni's favorite ways to de-stress is to stare out at the water - or any beautiful natural scene. Try it sometime.

Disconnecting: Mind. Body. Soul.

One of the most stressful things about holidays is the constant state of activity. As someone who typically needs a lot of downtime each day, I really struggle to keep myself feeling healthy during the holiday season.

The most effective salve I have for my soul during this hectic

time is ALONE TIME. The ability to decompress on my own time is essential.

Do folks fight me on it? Yup. Do family members sometimes feel hurt that I don't want to be at every event? Yup. But do I feel rested and ready to have fun to the max? YUP.

If you need to disconnect for an hour, a day: do it. - Editrix Jenni



"I've been living with chronic illness for more than 15 years. My life isn't perfect—far from it. But I've got a few tricks up my sleeve. The best one is simple: give yourself a time-out. A chance to refuel, to revive. To reboot. I believe in you. You can do it!"

- ChronicBabe Founder & Editrix Jenni Prokopy



If the holiday season is a time to celebrate... ...why not celebrate yourself? Hooray!

8. Don't feel like you have to play hostess every year. Give someone else a shot. However, if they need help, offer some of your time, because when it's your turn again you'll appreciate their help. No one can do it all on their own.
9. Michelle's family sets up an email to everyone who is coming and each person decides on a plate to bring. Potluck style is a fun way to have a party and try new things. Although, sometimes the host needs to make sure not everyone is bringing only desserts! (Or maybe not, says Jenni!)
10. Banish perfection. No one and nothing is perfect. Find the beauty in the flaws - that's what make life special.
11. Manage your meds (hide extra Xanax where you can find it fast!). No, really, bring plenty of extras if you're traveling, and make sure everything is refilled before the holiday rush.
12. Dietary restrictions? Plan for limitations - bring snacks. You may want to bring a special dish to a party to make sure you have something to eat, AND to show others that different recipes can still be delicious.

Gratitude is a wonderful healing tool. Encourage it. Bask in it. Share it.

13. Pace yourself. You don't have to go to every party. We give you PTMO (Permission to miss out).
14. Family of choice = friends. If you can't be with your family, your friends will be waiting for you with open arms.
15. Holidays can get lonely; schedule time with folks for short bursts. Use Skype or FaceTime to connect with far-away friends and family.
16. Holidays can be hectic; schedule downtime. It might never happen if you don't plan some specific time - so put it on your calendar, babes!
17. Long travel? Bring snacks, reading materials, extra charger or battery for iPhones, warm socks, layers, music, back pillow, meds, playing cards, pen and paper, trashy magazines... and anything else that will help you get through a long trip.
18. Delegate. It could be really simple. You don't have to do everything

Everybody pokes fun at Oprah for her focus on gratitude journals, but wow - did she nail that one! Take a few minutes each day during this hectic time to give thanks for what you have. Just trust us. It works.

yourself, and it can actually be fun to give up a little bit of control.

19. Get mobile! Holidays are often a time of sitting around, eating a lot and generally being sedentary. Buck the trend: take a walk while you're waiting for the turkey to cook; wander around your neighborhood to check out the Christmas lights; go iceskating; go sledding; have a snowball fights; build a snowman; do a little happy dance. And maybe get a little frisky under the mistletoe.
20. Don't give in to mindless consumerism. You don't have to spend a lot to honor someone with a thoughtful gift.

Make the holidays your own! Ride the crazy Christmas train. Dress like FrankenSanta. Do it your way and it will be WAY more fun!



Tired of old holiday traditions? Make your own. Make it yours.

21. Practice gratitude. Say thanks to everyone, from your bus driver to the mail carrier; from your waitress to your neighbor. This is actually a good practice all day, all year. It just makes you feel better!
22. Less can be more. Don't over-stress on too many decorations. Pick your absolute favorites and highlight them in your home. This also makes it easier to put it all away.
23. Have a fun cocktail. Don't get crazy. Don't mix with your meds. But if a cocktail takes the edge off: go for it.
24. Book your babysitter now. You deserve some alone time, or some romantic-time with your honey. So book your babysitter in advance so you can get away.
25. Rest. Make sure you're getting enough sleep. Take naps and down-time breaks. Rest is critical to healing and wellness. The better you feel, the more you'll enjoy the holiday season.

When we're younger, we tend to get stuck in the family-created holiday practices we grew up with. But that doesn't mean you're stuck eating awful traditional casserole or having a Christmas tree that's only decorated in red and green ornaments!

This year, make some part of the holidays all about YOU. Love painting your nails? Why not do a 12 days of Christmas countdown each day - a creative challenge that will entertain everyone around you, too. Love to make crazy snowcreatures in the front lawn? Be sure to dress them up wild! Want to skip the usual gift-giving traditions and instead hold a Secret Santa? Go for it.

The holidays are meant to **CELEBRATE** the season and this life. So make them a true celebration of YOUR life. Do it up right - in your style. Then send us some pics! XO, Michelle & Jenni

One more tip:

Find the de-stressing strategies that work best for you and keep a list for yourself to refer to in times of stress. Sounds simple, but easy to forget when we're under pressure. So do it NOW while things are still chill. ;)



THANK YOU!

Have some tips we missed? **Shoot them our way** and we'll add them in to the next edition.



We can't do it without you. Become part of the ChronicBabe community.

This is a community because you're a part of it, and there are so many ways to connect with ChronicBabes.

Check out the [website](#) where you can shop and read articles that motivate or help you learn to deal with your chronic illness.

Make sure to find the [forum](#) where you can offer solutions and tips of your

own or just get something off your chest.

Also, make sure to sign up for the ChronicBabe [newsletter](#), where we share lots of freebies and announce upcoming projects!

You can chat with us on many social media channels, like [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#), to get fast health

news and other babelicious updates.

Follow ChronicBabe on [Instagram](#) and [Pinterest](#) for cute pictures that lead to smart thoughts and articles.

That should keep you busy. See you online!

XO, and thanks!
- Editrix Jenni