

Holiday Well-Being: Your Guide to Feeling Grounded This Season

The holiday season can bring moments of connection and celebration, but it can also feel busy, tiring, or emotionally heavy. However this time of year shows up for you, these resources are here to offer steady, practical support.

You'll find guidance on staying grounded during full schedules, easing pressure by letting go of expectations, and setting boundaries that help protect your well-being. There are also tools for navigating holiday stress and anxiety, understanding how winter can affect mood and motivation, and finding your footing again once the festivities quiet down.

We've also included support for checking in on loved ones who may be finding this season more challenging, with suggestions on how to be present and offer care in a thoughtful, meaningful way.

Explore our curated holiday lineup and feel more grounded as you move through the season.



Holiday Stress and Anxiety Prevention

Simple strategies to manage holiday stress and anxiety for a calmer, more grounded season. [Click to read.](#)

Letting Go of Expectations

Find peace of mind by letting go and improve well-being through healthier expectations.

[Click to read.](#)

The Weight of Winter and Negative Thoughts

Understand the seasonal impact on mood, plus tools to challenge negative thinking.

[Click to read.](#)



Setting Healthy Holiday Boundaries

Tips to set boundaries that reduce stress, improve relationships, and protect your well-being. [Click to read.](#)

When a Loved One is Experiencing Depression: How to offer support

Compassionate guidance for supporting someone with depression without losing balance. [Click to read.](#)

How to Combat Your Post-Holiday Depression

Practical ways to ease post-holiday lows and restore emotional well-being. [Click to read.](#)

Homewood Health's EFAP plan members:

Access services online at homeweb.ca, and use Homewood Pathfinder for guided recommendations to mental health tools and supports or call 24/7: 1-800-663-1142

Wellness During the Holiday Season

*For more resources like this, focused on mental health during the holidays and winter, log in to homeweb.ca and browse the health resource library.

For many of us, the holiday season can be a fun and exciting time. But it can also be stressful, and overwhelming — especially when we're trying to do a lot in a short period of time. Many of us feel stress in December because we're unrealistic about how much we can accomplish in a limited amount of time.

Whether we're visiting loved ones, shopping, attending holiday work functions, or running simple errands, there is a lot to do. If the holiday season is making you feel anxious, or exhausted, here are some hints to help manage overload:

Tips for staying well during the holiday season

- **Prioritize.** Make a list of all the things you need to do, and decide which ones are the most important. Tackle the most important tasks first, and get to the rest only if you have the time and energy.
- **Stop striving for perfection.** We're often so wrapped up in buying the perfect gifts or cooking the perfect meals that we don't enjoy the holidays. Ask for help with errands or cooking, and find shortcuts. For example, if you don't have time to make cookies from scratch for the office potluck, buy them. People won't mind.
- **Learn to say "no."** With shopping and social events piled on top of busy jobs, parenting responsibilities, and everyday household responsibilities, we sometimes have to say "no" to people. It can be difficult, but if we don't, we can quickly find ourselves overscheduled and overwhelmed. For example, you might say, "Thanks for thinking of me, but I don't have the bandwidth right now."
- **Don't neglect your health.** It's easy to skip the gym when you need to go to the mall, or grab fast food between all of your errands. But during busy, stressful times, it's even more important to eat well, exercise, and get plenty of sleep. This will keep your energy levels up, elevate your mood, and help you maintain a strong immune system.
- **Find time to relax.** When at work, keep your lunch hour for yourself. Don't do chores or errands on your lunch break, and don't just continue working away. Also, try to relax for 10 or 15 minutes at home every night. For example, you could enjoy a good book or a hot bath.

Avoiding conflict

The holiday season may bring us into situations with people we don't get along with, or who manage to irritate and upset us. If you find yourself in such a situation, try to avoid discussing subjects that are likely to cause conflict. Relatives who have always gotten on your nerves or made you feel uncomfortable probably won't

change, so try to let their behaviour roll off your back and focus on enjoying the parts of the gathering that feel good to you.

Children can also act out during the holiday season. The decorations, activities, sugary treats, and disruption to their normal schedules can affect them in different ways. Watch for signs that they're becoming overwhelmed and understand that any challenging behaviour might be their way of expressing their stress. It helps to talk to children about what they can expect as the holidays get underway. Ask them if all the activity is making them feel anxious or sad.

You can help children maintain a sense of routine by including quiet family time in your plans, such as reading books together or taking leisurely walks as a family. This provides a "time out" from the excitement of the season.

Navigating the season

The flurry of holiday music, images, television programs and traditions are sometimes impossible to escape, and it's easy for some of us to feel alienated. The hectic time of year may leave you feeling isolated, or in need of support. If you're in such a situation, try the following:

- **Stay connected.** If you're feeling disconnected, you might try joining in at a level that feels comfortable for you. Even if it's just walking around the neighbourhood looking at the lights or going skating. There are often plenty of small, enjoyable things you can choose to do during the holidays.
- **Consider volunteering.** Shelters, places of worship, immigrant centres, hospitals, nursing homes, or organizations that promote literacy or provide housing, meals, and clothes to those in need are often in need of volunteers.
- **Get emotional support.** If you're missing loved ones who have passed away or can't be there to celebrate in person, make sure you reach out to friends or other family members who can give you the emotional support you need.

During the holiday season, it's important to maintain your sense of humour. Plans may shift and patience can be tested, but finding small moments to laugh or take things lightly can ease the pressure. Give yourself permission to relax when you can and enjoy the parts of the festivities that feel good to you.

If this time of year is bringing up difficult feelings, support is available.

Your Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Homewood Health's EFAP plan members: Access services online at homeweb.ca, and use Homewood Pathfinder for guided recommendations to mental health tools and supports or **call 24/7: 1-800-663-1142** | International (collect): 604-689-1717 | En français: 1-866-398-9505
All calls are confidential.

Not a Homewood EFAP plan member? Visit homewoodhealth.com/efap to learn more about EFAP services for organizations and supports available to individuals.