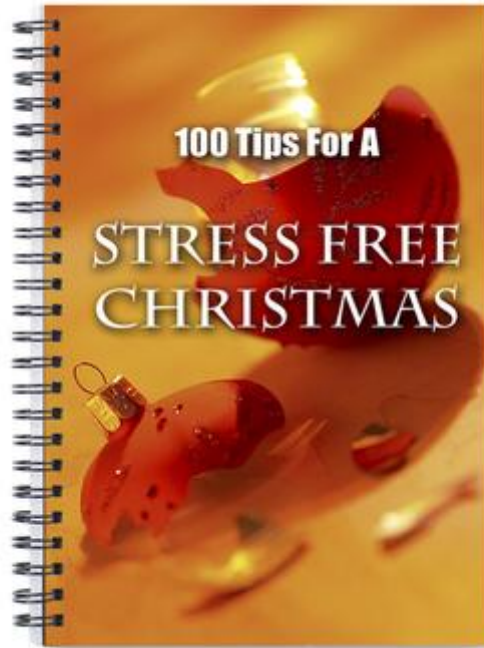


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How To Reduce Stress At Christmas There are any number of things which can stress us out at Christmas time, from money worries to relationship issues and the inevitable extra demands placed upon us by the holidays. Seasonal social gatherings, while supposed to be enjoyable, can turn out to be a minefield for sufferers of stress, particularly when these come in the form of an office party or family gathering which many people look forward to with dread rather than delight. Read on and you will learn how to reduce stress at Christmas ahead of the holidays. That way, you can sail serenely into the holidays armed with specific stress management tactics that you know will work. When it comes to stress caused by money worries, the best thing to do is set a Christmas budget and stick to it. Once you have your budget in place, allocate funds within it for separate Christmas necessities such as food and presents. All too often we are tempted to overspend when we hit the shops. Going armed with a detailed list and sticking to it is an excellent way to avoid this temptation. The other danger is that we tend to overstock, cramming our fridges and cupboards with all kinds of Christmas goodies that we neither really want nor need. Remember that you are not preparing for a siege. Most shops are only shut for a day or

two at most over the Christmas period. If you forget something, it is not the end of the world although having a list will help ensure that this does not happen. Sticking within budget on food will also help reduce stress in the weeks ahead when the post-Christmas bills start coming in. Spending wisely before Christmas means that you won't have to deal with the anxiety of paying bills that you cannot afford. Similarly, when it comes to present buying set a limit for each gift or go the homemade route. There is nothing more delightful than receiving a gift that has been made with love and care and in this difficult economic period we have all learned to appreciate far more the value of someone's time and effort. Having reduced your monetary stress at Christmas, you will be in a much better position to tackle any potential relational stress over the holiday season. To do so effectively, it is important that you both set boundaries and reduce your expectations. Do not allow old hurts or issues to arise and refuse to be drawn into arguments old and new. Simply let aggravating or provocative behavior pass you by rather than letting it upset or stress you. Above all, do not expect anyone to behave perfectly ?not even you! It is unrealistic to expect anyone to do so but especially at Christmas when families spend far more time together and the pace of life is so hectic. Follow these tips on how to reduce stress at Christmas and you find yourself able to enjoy the festive season with a far more relaxed attitude. This, in turn, will keep stress symptoms in check and stop you falling victim to a stress spiral where your stressed reactions give rise to yet more symptoms and so on. Keep your sense of humor intact and your attitude flexible and you will not go far wrong. Remember that it is up to you to show others how to treat you. Respect yourself and your own limits over Christmas and you will find that others do the same.

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