

## Overcoming\_seasonal\_anxiety\_mrr



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Dealing With Anxiety At Christmas Christmas, and the weeks leading up to the big day, can present a minefield for those of us who suffer from anxiety. The weight of expectation and seemingly endless o do?lists conspire to trigger pre-existing anxiety symptoms or even set off a first attack. Dealing with anxiety at Christmas is, however, simply a matter of recognising the danger signals and setting yourself up so that you know you can handle the pressures during the holiday period. One of the best ways to do this is to set clear boundaries both for you and for others. Don't take on too much in the way of chores such as holiday shopping and enlist support and help from friends or family. This support can be practical or emotional but it really helps to spread the load and to ensure that other people are aware of your needs. Simply knowing that those close to you are aware of your anxiety disorder and possible symptoms can make all the difference. This will help minimise any embarrassment or awkwardness you might otherwise feel and will mean that your loved ones are more able to make allowances for the impact of your anxiety symptoms on those around you. There are a number of techniques you can use to help you when dealing with anxiety at Christmas or any other stressful time. These include: ?Exercise ?both gentle

forms such as tai chi and more vigorous exercise such as jogging have been shown to be effective when dealing with anxiety. ?Yoga ?deep breathing combined with the required focus on attaining and maintaining yoga positions is an excellent antidote to anxiety. ?Meditation ?in its many forms has also proved to be immensely useful for sufferers of anxiety disorders. ?Visualization ?picturing and focusing on positive outcomes to anticipated events can dramatically diminish the anxiety a sufferer might otherwise feel. All of the above allow you to create space and time for yourself which is essential if you are to come through the Christmas period without suffering an anxiety attack. Even ten or twenty minutes spent in quiet meditation or simply taking a soak in the tub will allow you to refresh and regenerate away from the stressors of the seasonal period. Another important tool in your armory against anxiety attacks during the holidays is to set your expectations low. Far too often we build things up to a point that even the idea is enough to set your heart racing. Telling yourself that nothing is ever perfect, including Christmas, will immediately help diminish that weight of expectation. Keeping expectations realistic will mean that when someone in the family is not behaving like a Christmas angel, the turkey refuses to cook and the shops have run out of that essential present then you will be able to handle it. Dealing with anxiety is all about reducing those stressors that trigger your symptoms. Lower your expectations and you will also be lowering the likelihood of an anxiety attack at this stressful time of year.

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