

Handling Holiday Stress – A Survival Guide

By Dr. Glen Schaffer

Whichever holiday that is presently looming, you know they are not always the relaxing times you'd like them to be. This is especially true during the Christmas season. Shopping, visiting, hosting, eating and drinking ... it all becomes a mad blur that can leave you needing, well, a holiday.

Humans are pretty resilient creatures, but we can start to lag when we ask too much from our bodies for too long. The combination of the wrong food, drinking, late nights, rushing around, and, let's say it, family stresses, can all amount to overload, and we start suffering.

Moving into the holiday season, we should always try to keep our excesses to a minimum. Try to achieve a balance and remember to eat as healthily as possible, despite the rather than less healthy meals that you may be obliged to eat to keep the peace with the relatives. Make sure you drink plenty of water to flush out your system, stretch out your muscles to ease the tension, and don't forget to exercise during the holidays.

Here are 5 tips to keep you in tip-top condition if you're going for...

1. Shopping Gold Medal

- Stay well-hydrated. Drink eight to ten 8-ounce glasses of water every day, and don't substitute any of that with coffee, tea, soft drinks and alcohol, because those drinks are diuretics that will end up robbing you of water.
- Stretch both before and after a marathon shopping expedition. Shopping can be stressful and your muscles need all the help they can get to stay relaxed.
- Choose your shopping shoes for their comfort not style. You need plenty of cushioning to counteract those endless hours on your feet.
- Wear comfortable clothing as well, and, if it's cold out, have a few layers so you can peel them off and pile them on as you move from the streets to the warm shop interiors and back out again.
- Any slight aches and pains you feel after a day out shopping, grab an ice pack and apply to the affected area for 20 minutes, before removing for at least two hours. Repeat several times over a day or two until you feel better.



2. R & R



- When having a serious shopping day, take a break every 45 minutes, or more often if you feel the need.
- In a mall or a shopping area where lockers are provided, use one to store your shopping bags as you acquire them. Or if you can park close by, drop the bags in the trunk every so often.
- If you're hungry, eat something light or you'll feel very sluggish when you resume shopping. It can also be dangerous to burden your system then continue with what can amount to physical exercise.
- Coffee may seem like a good idea as a quick boost, but it adds extra stress to the system. As for soda, that's also not a good idea. Ever. Stick with water.

3. Kids with You

- Children and extended shopping trips don't go together. Not only will they tire before you do and want to go home, they will want to buy everything in every shop. That's a double whammy of whining that's going to stress you out. If at all possible try and get someone to look after them instead.



4. That's a Wrap



- When wrapping all those gifts, make sure you don't sit or stand in one position for too long, or you'll start to ache. Vary your position, but avoid wrapping while sitting on the floor, even when carpeted, as this is very bad for your posture.
- It may sound a little OTT, but stretch before and after wrapping your gifts.

5. Chiropractic Care Can Help

- Your doctor of chiropractic can help with natural treatment options if you experience any pain or discomfort after shopping.