

# 7 Ways to Prevent a Holiday Stress Meltdown

By **Sabah Karimi**

The time after Halloween through New Year's Day can put your patience and positive attitude to the test; stress levels usually peak right before Thanksgiving when family events, shopping for coworkers and getting the kids ready for holiday revelries take over your already-packed schedule.

When gift shopping feels like an impossible feat and you've given up on cooking that perfect Thanksgiving meal, here are seven ways to stop a holiday stress meltdown from taking over those special days ahead:

- 1. Delegate your to-do list.** You don't have to shoulder all of the chores and responsibilities over the holidays, so make a point about delegating tasks and small jobs the kids and other family members whenever possible. If you can break up tasks into smaller, more manageable processes you'll spend less time explaining what you need and can take care of business like a pro!
- 2. Eat a solid breakfast.** Keeping your energy levels up through the holiday season can be a challenge, but when you're caught up in a whirlwind of errands and last-minute shopping runs, fatigue can be your biggest challenge. Eat a hearty breakfast each morning so you're not trapped in a stressed out spin cycle.
- 3. Skip the holiday cookie tray.** It's easy to turn to sugar when you're feeling burned out or overwhelmed, but fueling up on cookies and sweet treats can lead to skyrocketing stress levels. The temporary fix will catch up with you, so steer clear of the cookie tray and enjoy dessert after a meal so you're less likely to overindulge.
- 4. Get some sleep.** Those long hours shopping, wrapping presents and decorating in the wee hours of the morning can take their toll on your sleep habits and leave you more worn out than usual. Try and stick to a steady sleep schedule or squeeze in some power naps to recharge in the midst of high-stress season.
- 5. Break up larger projects over the week.** Trying to tackle the gift list with one trip isn't realistic, especially if you've left your holiday shopping for the last few days before Christmas. Break up each trip into a series of trips over a few weeks and shop for just a few people at a time; this will help you consolidate your time and you might even enjoy the experience.
- 6. Take a time out for just for you.** Whether you head to the spa for a pampering session or hit the snooze button to sleep in one day out of the week, make a conscious effort to call a 'time out' so you can enjoy some peace and quiet. Schedule it in if you have to!
- 7. Quit while you're ahead.** After a day of scoring great deals at the mall, the kids behaving like perfect little angels and the holiday cookies turning out perfectly, enjoy the rewards of the day by putting a hold on holiday tasks. Quitting while you're ahead will give you more motivation to continue onward the following day and you can slow down and enjoy the moment.