

# Top 10 tips for surviving the season



1. Change your expectations of family members. If you and your sister bicker all year long, chances are that tension will not be eliminated on Christmas Day. It may even be intensified. If you and your guests know that, there will likely be less disappointment if there is an argument.
2. Perfectionism may need to be replaced with “good enough”. Will anyone notice that the ribbons match the wrapping paper? Or that the ornaments are coordinated? Most people love store-bought Christmas cookies as much as the homemade varieties and you can use that extra time to enjoy the season.
3. Stay on budget. Consider having a cash envelope for each person you will buy a gift for and then do not go to the cash machine or use your credit card. Only use as much money as there is in each person’s envelope to avoid overspending.
4. Stay active. Enjoy outdoor activities such as skating, skiing, sledding or simply a winter walk. This can help make the cold weather more bearable and give you a break from any stress the holidays bring.
5. Consider gift exchanges that do not involve material objects. Give a coupon for free babysitting, or use the skills you have, such as offering a free haircut, or an oil change. Easier on the pocket book and eliminates time spent shopping in busy malls for the right gift.
6. Give back. Even if you cannot donate money, attempt to give even an hour of your time by volunteering. It helps most of us remember how fortunate we are even when times are tough.
7. Allow yourself to grieve. Even if a loved one died long ago, you may be surprised how often you think of them at Christmas. Honour those memories and you may find that others at your gathering may be having the same thoughts and would welcome an opportunity to talk about the ones that are not with us this year.
8. Get plenty of rest. ‘Tis the season for late nights. Try to stay on your regular sleep routine.
9. Plan your eating. Do not go to a Christmas function when you are starving as you will likely overindulge. Instead, try to have a healthy meal before you go or snack on veggies rather than sweets some of the time. Avoid excessive use of alcohol or drugs. Not only can alcohol pack on the calories, it can affect one’s mood. Drug use may also alter personality.
10. Focus on your spirituality. You may not be religious but consider what areas in your life bring you peace, joy and serenity and nurture those this holiday season.