



De-Stress Your Holidays

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Over the holidays exercise often gets pushed aside and replaced by parties, shopping, cooking, entertaining and, of course, eating. But just because you're not donning the summer shorts doesn't mean exercise should take a back seat to cocktails and fruitcake. During this festive season exercise isn't just about looking good in your party clothes - exercise is a great source of stress reduction – something desperately needed during holiday time. So don't cross it off your day-planner come Thanksgiving!

Over-booked schedules are the norm in November and December. All of the extra responsibilities make it hard to get off the treadmill of life and onto the one at the gym. But when you're working non-stop, moving into a different environment can give you an edge: Changing your surroundings can stimulate your brain to produce new ideas and thoughts. So, getting outside for a walk can inspire your creativity; and grabbing a few minutes at the gym can enable you to focus better on current projects.

When you're tired from all the shopping and visiting, exercise is probably the last thing you'd think about doing for an energy boost. But, believe it or not, it works! Exercise increases adrenaline (epinephrine), and norepinephrine – the stimulants naturally produced by the brain. It reduces the level of blood chemicals that cause fatigue and depression. And, it increases blood flow to the muscles, heart, and brain, which can provide the boost you need to interact meaningfully with family, friends and co-workers even after a long day of work.

Along with the stress of an overloaded schedule, there's also the stress of social eating. At parties, we're presented with food we don't normally eat – and we may splurge a little. Instead of feeling guilty for eating too much – work out a little more! A little extra calorie burn can really help during this time of abundant food and drink. And, exercise is key to getting you through the holidays without a glitch in your healthy metabolism. So say “yes” to exercise, and “no” to that extra serving of guilt.

Contrary to popular belief, a hectic schedule is a good reason to exercise, not to avoid it. If you don't have an hour to work out every day, give it twenty minutes... even ten. Something is better than nothing. And, with all the work and energy you're going to need for the holiday season, you can't afford not to exercise!

It's recommended that you talk to your doctor before starting to workout. This is basic exercise information for the general public. If you have injuries or other physical limitations, this exercise may not be appropriate. A good rule of thumb: If it doesn't feel good- don't do it!

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