

Holiday Fatigue and Stress

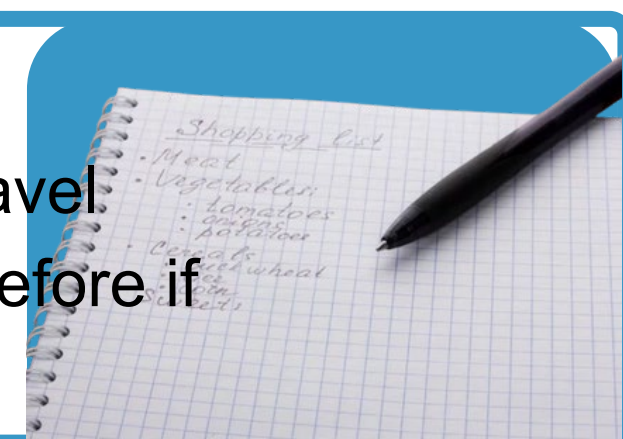


The holiday season can be both stressful and exhausting. The winter holidays, arriving right after daylight savings time, can disrupt your circadian rhythm even further and lead to increased fatigue.

Here are some tips to help manage holiday fatigue:

Plan Ahead

Waiting until last minute to plan a dinner or social event, go shopping for gifts, and making travel plans can all be sources of stress. Taking time early in the holiday season, or even months before if needed, to make plans and prepare can significantly reduce stress once the holidays arrive.



Set Realistic Expectations

Finances may be a cause of stress, so taking a few minutes to write down your anticipated expenses and budget before you start planning can help avoid disappointments and stress. Expectations from past years can lead to feelings of not doing enough in preparation. It's important to be aware of other's and your own expectations, setting boundaries, and give yourself permission to decline or compromise on things you can't afford, or don't have the time or energy to do.

Prioritize Sleep Hygiene

In a stressful, busy time, sleep is often one of the few things you have some control over. If possible, try to maintain a consistent sleep schedule, not drink caffeine past late morning, limit alcohol intake close to bedtime, and try to avoid electronics that emit blue light at least an hour before going to bed.



Watch your Health

It can be easy to overindulge with food and alcohol this time of year, take breaks from your regular exercise routine, and get fewer hours of sleep. All of these practices can make you more susceptible to illness and can add to holiday fatigue. It's great to treat yourself, but try not to stray too far from your typical health routines.

Know Stress Symptoms

Moderate stress can be beneficial, and can help with meeting goals and handling adversity. This "positive" stress supports work and home life. However, excessive stress can become harmful, and can lead to different physical, psychosocial, and behavioural signs and symptoms.

Physical		Psychosocial		Behavioural	
Headaches	Muscle aches	Anxiety	Apathy	Impatience	Social isolation
Grinding teeth	Digestive issues	Irritability	Sadness/Depression	Quickness to argue	Change in relationships
Clenched jaw	Chest pain	Defensiveness	Slowed thinking	Procrastination	Neglecting responsibility
Fatigue and Insomnia	High blood pressure	Hypersensitivity	Racing thoughts	Increased smoking or drinking	Poor job performance

If the effects of stress are overwhelming and appear to be the cause of emotional or physical issues, seek professional help through a medical professional or your EFAP program.