

Build and Embody Healthy Habits as You Enter the Holiday Season

Healthy habits are what fuel our body to accomplish the day's tasks. Many people rely on a routine to function. By nature, people are very habitual creatures. We eat the same things at certain restaurants, we buy the same soap, and shop for the same groceries each trip. Perhaps you start with the same daily tasks in the office and review your calendar, check your email, and identify three tasks to complete that day. Routine helps bring balance to our lives.

However, the holidays are fast approaching. Holidays can easily throw you out of your daily routine. Your workdays may change or become more erratic to support the holidays, and projects may push to wrap up by year-end. You probably stay up later, preparing for food and family, and your diet can change drastically. This detraction from your daily routine can have side effects on your mental and physical health. Here are some tips for conquering holiday fatigue with healthy habits.

- Read to create a calm and quiet environment
- Exercise allows you to focus on yourself
- Meditation lets you focus on your mental health
- Healthy eating energizes your body for the day

Read to Create a Calm and Quiet Environment

Diving into a good book allows your mind to wander into a story that is not your own. Reading creates a calmness that can destress your mind of its holiday worries. Everyone is determined to make everything perfect for family and friends, or even your clients and colleagues. This drive is draining on your mind and body. Reading allows an escape. Picking up a good book before bed can make falling asleep more effortlessly rather than watching TV or sitting up awake, worrying about immediate project deliverables, 2021 project planning, or even shopping for gifts or cooking.

If you cannot find time to read for yourself, reading to your children can be a great alternative. If reading can make your kids fall asleep, why can't it have the same effects for yourself? Promoting reading time in your household can keep everyone feeling refreshed and calmer around the holiday chaos and give you more material to work with during the small talk conversations before or after a work meeting.

Exercise Allows You to Focus on Yourself

Exercising can come in many different forms that are suited to any given person's lifestyle. There is yoga, Pilates, Zumba, weight training, cardio, or various outdoor activities. It is essential to excite your muscles and burn energy throughout your day. While many think adding a daily workout to your holiday planning plate can be too much, it may be one of the few things you do entirely for yourself, by yourself. Physical activity can save you from some of the controlling thoughts that the holidays promote and allows you to harmonize your mind and body, which can be rare during a time of chaos and cravings at home or at work (even if work is another part of your home!).

Meditation Allows You to Focus on Your Mental Health

Your brain is a delicate processor and can only process so much information at one time. When your routine changes, it can stimulate your brain from its natural processes and sometimes cause your brain to move into panic mode. And with panic, often comes anxiety. Here is an incredibly simple approach to meditate and return to a relaxed and peaceful state – even within the confines of your own home.

- Create a comfortable, quiet space to sit for at least 5 minutes.
- Focus on your breath and watch your thoughts pass like clouds in the sky.
- Begin to lengthen your breath and settle into your body as you breathe in and out.

Meditation allows your mind to take a well-deserved rest and return to a natural resting state so that you have more patience with friends and family. Creating this kind of calmness also helps you gain a new perspective on family or work conflicts that may arise during the holiday season and hectic year-end work routines.

Healthy Eating Energizes Your Body for the Day

Your body works around your internal clock and schedule. When your alarm goes off until the time you go to bed, your body knows what to prepare for and where to allocate energy based on your daily routine. One vital way you do this is through the food you fuel your body. Your body becomes accustomed to the food you put into your body based on your regular eating patterns. Your body knows when you will be eating and plans for what you are going to eat. The same goes for how you may lead a team – including the way you run a meeting to the way you deliver feedback - teammates become accustomed to how you work. Some dietary ingredients like sugar, dairy, and wheat can make you feel energized at first but maybe sluggish later in the day. Each person is different and processes food differently. That said, the holidays bring many foods you are not used to eating in your diet and may have adverse effects on your body's energy level and overall health.



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Consider indulging during the holidays with intentionality, balance a festive morning brunch with a healthy lunch and dinner. Or consider bringing a healthier dish to an event that resembles your regular eating patterns. Similar to the way you work, it's important to celebrate the wins and accomplishments and equally important to return to your day-to-day responsibilities.

The holidays are a time for love and laughter with family and friends, as well as honoring and appreciating clients and colleagues. We hope these tips allow you to feel more energized to soak in the fun of the holiday spirit – at work and at home.

-Erica



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