

Finding balance this holiday season

The holiday season is almost upon us. While this time of year is meant to be joyful, it can make many of us feel overwhelmed, which can lead to stress, anxiety, and physical and emotional exhaustion. From gift shopping to holiday get togethers to hosting out-of-town guests, our normal routines and daily habits may be disrupted over the next two months.

Here are five tips to consider that can help bring some balance back in your life during the holidays:

- 1. Prioritize sleep and self-care.** It's important to listen to your body and get the rest you need during the holidays. Sleep is crucial to keeping your immune system strong. It allows your mind and body to recharge, helping you to maintain a healthy weight, and even regulate your mood. Set time aside to decompress and relax each day and make sure you are getting the recommended hours of sleep you need depending on your age.
- 2. Be present.** When your mind is in overdrive, it can cause unnecessary stress. Stay in the moment by practicing mindfulness. Take deep breaths throughout the day. Instead of obsessing about your "to-do" list for tomorrow, give your full attention to the present and the people around you. Make sure you embrace your senses, too. For instance, savor each bite of your holiday meals by chewing slowly.
- 3. Limit alcohol.** All those celebratory holiday cocktails can quickly add unexpected sugar and calories into your diet. Alcohol can also interfere with your sleep and impact your mood. Opt for a "mocktail" or flavored water instead. Feeling left out by not joining the toast? Try water with a splash of cranberry and a lime. No one will know it's alcohol free.
- 4. Stay physically active.** It can be tempting to skip the gym when you are pressed for time. Maintain your regular exercise schedule but opt for shorter workouts with a little more intensity. If you need some inspiration, put on some holiday music and get dancing in your living room or while making dinner.
- 5. Take advantage of fresh seasonal foods.** There are plenty of fruits and vegetables that peak in fall, so be sure to add those to the holiday menu and to fill up half of your holiday plate with them. Some healthy and delicious choices are Brussels sprouts, pumpkin, winter squash, sweet potatoes, cauliflower, carrots, celery, nuts, apple, clementines, and figs. Fueling your body the right way will give you the energy you need to enjoy all that the holiday season has to offer.

By following these simple tips, you can have a healthy and balanced holiday season without tipping the scales, feeling exhausted or overwhelmed, or missing out on important moments.