

## Do's and Don'ts for a Less Stressful Holiday Season

### **Don't set unrealistic expectations for the holidays.**

Use the holiday job list to figure out what activities and tasks are really important to you and to your family. Keep your days simple. Your energy level is low. Focus and concentration may be difficult. Memory is compromised.



### **Do set realistic goals. Prioritize them and pace yourself.**

Make a list of what you would like to do, prioritize your list, and ask for help. Set out a timetable for doing those things that are most important to you. Tackle one small goal each day. If you don't get them all done, so what?

### **Do something new.**

Your life has changed, and so have the traditions. Decide with your family whether you want to do things differently or the same. Do you put up a smaller tree or forget about decorating with lights outside? Must you send holiday cards? What about baking and shopping?

### **Don't drink alcohol.**

The holiday season, when one is grieving, can be a time of self evaluation, loneliness and reflection. Alcohol is a depressant. It can aggravate sad feelings based on losses experienced during the year or not being with your loved one.

### **Do surround yourself with supportive people.**

You need people around you who understand your grief, and are comfortable with your sadness. Your first inclination may be to withdraw and hide from the world, but too much isolation can prevent you from feeling connected to those sources of love around you.

### **Do find time for yourself.**

You also need time to grieve and to be alone with your thoughts. Balance your day with time alone and time with loved ones and friends. Use your alone time to journal, pray, sleep, or read an inspirational meditation book.

### **Do something for someone else.**

This is a powerful healer. Reaching out to those less fortunate can help put your loss in perspective, and give you a peaceful feeling. Take some cookies to someone in a nursing home, volunteer at church, or help a neighbor with a small project.

### **Do something to commemorate your loved one.**

Read [Remembering and Commemorating Loved Ones during the Holidays](#) on Hospice of the Piedmont's website for a list of suggestions.

### **If you find yourself feeling down during the holidays, try these suggestions:**

- Take a quiet walk in a park.
- Drink a cup of hot tea or cocoa.
- Get up early and listen to the quiet.
- Contact a good friend and have lunch.
- Ask someone to drive you around to see the lights, and just be quiet together.
- Read an uplifting book by the fire.
- Listen to some quiet music.
- Go to a holiday play or concert.



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