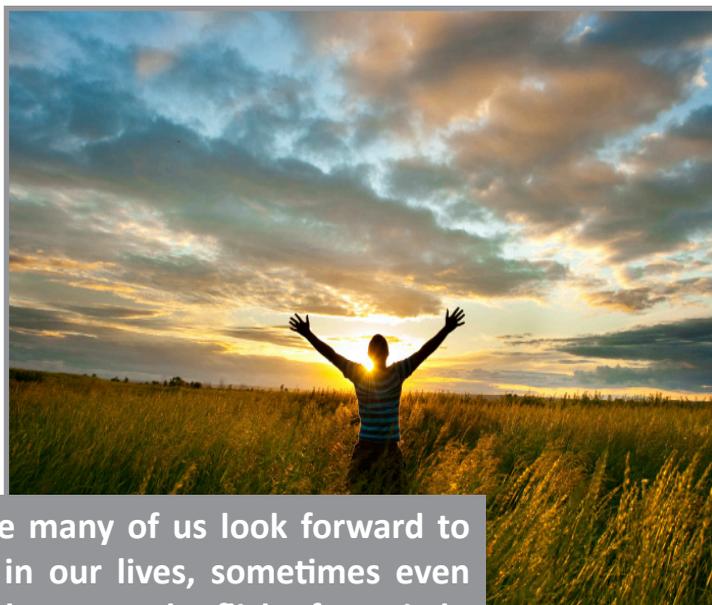


# Unwinding during the festive season



The festive season is here, and while many of us look forward to it, it can be a very stressful period in our lives, sometimes even depressing as we are expected to be happy at the flick of a switch. Here are some tips on keeping your cool during the festive season.

## **Set realistic expectations**

Let go of ideas of what your celebrations should be like. Things go wrong, family members argue, children spill things on valuables; it happens. Rather live in the moment and focus on the meaningful moments.

## **Accept your feelings**

If you're not feeling joyful or relaxed, don't be too hard on yourself. These feelings are completely normal. If you are feeling persistently sad or anxious, however, it's best to consult a counsellor or mental health professional as soon as possible.

## **Identify your stressors**

Try to identify what is stressing you out and how you are dealing with it. Then find a way of dealing with it or reframing it so that it doesn't cause so much stress.

## **Prioritise your time and set limits**

Make a list of everything you want to accomplish, from chores to leisure time. This way, you can be productive and have a good time. Be realistic about what you can do and schedule time for

breaks. It's important to make time for yourself. Don't feel obligated to accept every invitation. Remember to include time for yourself as even 15 minutes a day could do wonders.

## **Share responsibility**

Don't take responsibility for everything. Delegate some of the holiday activities to friends or family.

## **Exercise**

Exercise will not only help you manage any stress, but will also help you ward off the weight gain that normally accompanies the festive season.

## **Limit alcohol, caffeine, and sugar intake**

Using these might make you feel better in the short term, but will only aggravate your stress after the initial high. This is because they cause your blood sugar to rise and fall, which can cause mood swings and can lead to fatigue.

The festive season doesn't have to be stressful. With realistic expectations, adequate planning, and mindfulness, you can manage the stress, accept the things that go wrong, and have a restful, and well-deserved, break.