

# Ten tips to make the most of festivities

Psychotherapist, Susi Ambrose of Seventy Thirty, advises on how to get the best out of Christmas

**T**he holidays are times of great joy for some, and times of stress and frustration for others.

Psychotherapist Susi Ambrose has 10 tips on how best to manage the stress of the holidays.

1. Accept that this time of year is stressful. The expectation we have of ourselves to 'perform' is in direct proportion to the amount of stress we experience during the holidays.

2. An important thing to remember is that perfection isn't necessary to create priceless memories. Focus on the special (and sometimes silly) moments that will be remembered by everyone for years to come.

3. Being mindful, focusing on one thing at a time, staying in the moment, all help to slow down the rush and decrease the stress in our bodies and in our minds. One trick to help focus when you feel stressed during holiday-related activities is to look at your feet, notice where they are, and focus your energy on that place for a moment, really grounding

yourself in the present place. This can help with anxiety and stress, and keep us from feeling too rushed.

4. During holiday times it seems there are an infinite number of additional activities to pack into our already hectic schedules. There are some events we must go to, regardless of our feelings, but there are others we can say no to. Take the time to check-in mentally and think about each event and its importance to you, your family and your friendships.

5. Separated/Divorced. During the holiday season in particular, most people expect to feel happy but that isn't always the case. Rather than being hard on yourself, if you're feeling a little angry or lonely, try to accept your feelings. For many people life actually takes a turn for the better once they accept the divorce. Make up your mind that you're going to keep the drama out of your children's lives; allow Christmas to be a joyful time for them.

6. Delegate. Most women are wonderful at 'multi-tasking'. Share the shopping, cooking, cleaning, etc. responsibilities with others. You don't have to



**GET CHRISTMAS SUSSED:** Susie Ambrose, centre, with clients.

do it all yourself. Remember to enjoy the simple company of your loved ones.

7. Avoid over-eating or drinking. When the brain gets stressed it sends out signals for fat and sugar, which is why the holiday season can be so problematic for our waistlines. The best idea is to plan indulgences and make a morning-after plan. 8. We make lists and strategies for many areas of our life. This year make a 'holiday success list' of the activities close to

your heart. These are the things that are most important to you.

9. Taking care of yourself during this hectic time is essential in order to maintain a sense of balance in your work and home life.

10. This is a time of year to help others, to focus on those less fortunate than ourselves and to be grateful for the good things in our lives. First, take a moment to be generous to yourself. Take a deep breath, relax, and have a happy, healthy holiday.

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