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**Contents**



**How Do You Do Christmas Stress? 7**

- 1. What do you love about Christmas? ..7
- 2. Know your Christmas stress type? ....8
- 3. Uncover your stress triggers? .....8
- 4. What are you worried about? .....9
- 5. What's your Christmas baggage?.....9
- 6. What are you creating? .....10
- 7. What do you want instead? .....10
- 8. Remember what Christmas is really about for you.....11
- 9. Create your own personal de-stress strategies. ....11
- 10. Decide "I'm going to enjoy this!" ..12



**Finding The Time For Christmas.....14**

- 11. How to prioritise .....14
- 12. Have a clear-out / de-clutter .....15

- 13. Finish one thing at a time ..... 16
- 14. Avoid common time stealers ..... 16
- 15. Get multi-tasking..... 17
- 16. Plan ahead ..... 17
- 17. Is there stuff you can put off till January?..... 18
- 18. Something's got to drop off the table 18
- 19. Split things into manageable chunks 19
- 20. Get organised ..... 19
- 21. Practise saying no! .....20
- 22. Are you panicking? ..... 20
- 23. Timeline it .....21
- 24. Learn how to relax..... 21



**Strategies for staying sane..... 24**

- 25. Don't forget to sleep .....24
- 26. What to do if you're too stressed to sleep. 25
- 27. Anticipate positively ..... 25
- 28. If you don't enjoy it, don't do it! OR see number 29..... 26
- 29. If you don't enjoy it, CHOOSE to enjoy it! 26
- 30. Indulge in something that makes you feel good every day ..... 27



31. No one can *make* you feel stressed 27

32. If what you're doing isn't working, do something different.....28

33. Don't beat yourself up.....28

34. Don't sweat the small stuff.....29

35. Getting grounded.....29

36. Take a hike & get some fresh air.30

37. Dance and sing.....30

38. Stretch it out.....31

39. Drink some water.....31

40. How are you sitting? .....32

41. Take a deep breath.....32

42. Give yourself a hand / foot massage.....33

43. Massage your ears! .....33

44. Keep things in perspective.....34

45. Moving on up (the emotional scale) 34

46. Smiling releases endorphins.....35

47. Shoulder shrug .....35

48. What are your top 3 stress relievers? .....36

49. Stare at a candle.....36

50. Take up meditation – daily sunshine mailing list.....37

**Presents, Cards & Decorating**.....39

51. Shop online.....39

52. Don't spend more than you can afford 39

53. It's not about how much you spend. 39

54. Be organised .....40

55. Do you really want to send cards for Christmas? .....40

56. Get help with the decorating.....40

57. Do you really want to give Christmas presents? .....41

58. Dealing with the credit crunch? ...41

59. People want love, not presents ...41

60. Believe people when they say they don't want presents .....42

61. [www.buynothingchristmas.org](http://www.buynothingchristmas.org) ....42

62. Just make a decision! .....43

63. Don't do it all on your own .....43



**Christmas Entertaining** .....45

64. Shop ahead .....45

65. Plan a menu that will work for everyone.....45

66. Check ahead for anyone with allergies46

67. Alcohol & caffeine – less is more 46

68. What are you eating? .....46



- 69. Eating the wrong stuff will make you tired and stressed. ....47
- 70. Up your Omega oils .....47
- 71. If everyone hates Brussels Sprouts, don't cook them! .....47
- 72. Christmas is about creating memories.....48
- 73. Peel & slice the night before .....48



- The Big Day** .....50
- 74. Create a big "to do" list .....50
- 75. Be a peace maker.....50
- 76. Dare to wear your rose-tinted glasses 50
- 77. Ask others to be honest about what they want to do – then believe them.....51
- 78. Be realistic – do you really want a saccharin-sweet family Christmas? .....51
- 79. Whatever happens, look for the silver lining .....51
- 80. Kill them with kindness .....52
- 81. It's not a competition.....52
- 82. You're not responsible for whether others enjoy themselves.....52
- 83. Spread a little happiness .....53
- 84. You can't change others, but you *can* change how you respond .....53
- 85. Focus on what goes well .....54

- 86. Take time out for yourself .....54
- 87. Ask for help – don't be a Christmas martyr! 54
- 88. "Slippery Shoulds" – who says? ..55
- 89. If you're a guest, offer to help. Ask for a job. ....55
- 90. *Let* others get involved! .....55
- 91. Speak your truth – with compassion! .....56
- 92. Others' expectations are just that. 56
- 93. Create your own traditions .....56
- 94. Don't battle on regardless. ....57
- 95. Use your camera to capture happy memories.....57
- 96. Open presents slowly .....57
- 97. Sort wrapping and recycling as you go 58
- 98. Avoid politics & religion .....58
- 99. Don't over-hype the kids.....58
- 100. Flexibility & compromise.....59
- 101. Have fun! .....59

**What's Next?** .....60



## Welcome!

Welcome to 101 Ways To A Stress Free Christmas!

In this e-Guide you're going to find tips, techniques and strategies that can help you reduce your stress levels this Christmas and feel even happier.

The great thing is that most of them aren't just for Christmas – you can apply them all year round.

Some of them are based on sound psychological principles, some of them are based on bucket loads of common sense and some of them are simply things I've discovered over the years of surviving yet another family Christmas!

So whatever your Christmas stresses, there will be plenty here to help you out.

If you reach one of the methods and it doesn't seem to fit for you, that's fine, just skip to the next one.

And when you're through your Christmas stress, remember you can share how it all went at the exclusive discussion thread in our How To Feel Happier Club!

<http://howtofeelhappier.ning.com>

Wishing you a wonderful Christmas and a year full of sunshine and laughter in 2009!

Love,

Clare x

Clare Josa

Founder, How To Feel Happier

International author, seminar leader and expert coach.



Before you start looking at how to de-stress Christmas, it's really useful to understand how you actually *do* getting stressed.

**Figuring this out gives you a massive head start on dealing with your stress triggers and having a happier, calmer Christmas.**



## How Do *You* Do Christmas Stress?



Before you start looking at how to de-stress Christmas, it's really useful to understand how you actually *do* getting stressed.

Imagine you had to teach someone else how to *do* your version of Christmas stress? What steps would they need to go through?

**Figuring this out gives you a massive head start on dealing with your stress triggers and having a happier, calmer Christmas.**



To help you on your way, here are ten ways you can work out what your Christmas stress patterns are – and start doing something about them!

### 1. What do you love about Christmas?

Let's start with understanding *why* you're even bothering with Christmas stress! How about making a list of the top 10 reasons why you love Christmas?

It's usually quite easy to get the first 5 or 6, but if you keep going to number 10 (or beyond!), you'll get some real gems.

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Now you can refer back to this list every time you're feeling stressed over the Christmas period! It'll help you keep things in perspective.

How about copying it out and sticking it on your fridge door?



2. Know your **Christmas** stress type?

Are you the **Strong, Silent Type**? Showing the outside world that all is well, whilst bubbling away like a pre-eruption volcano inside?

Are you the **Drama Queen**? (No offence! I have previously counted myself amongst this worthy brigade!). Do you gladly share the tales of your Christmas woes with all who will listen?

Are you the **Brigadier**? Stiff upper lip, carry on regardless, got to achieve the goal? Prepared to steam roller through resistance, should anyone be foolish enough to get in your way?

Or perhaps you're the **Christmas Fairy**? Jumping from the top of one tree to the next, spinning as many plates as you can keep in the air, whilst not quite getting anything done?

And finally we come to the **Willing Volunteer**. If this is you, you'll find yourself taking on more and more of the jobs that others could be helping with, until you get to the point that you're wishing for Christmas to be over.

These are, of course, caricatures of how we respond to Christmas stress – and there's a little bit of each of them in all of us.

Whatever your Christmas stress type, simply being aware of it frees you up to make the choice of whether or not to change.

3. **Uncover** your stress triggers?

Although most of us are pretty good at doing stress, in general, we tend to have our preferred things we get stressed about.

It might be not having enough time. It might be not having enough money. It might be worrying about other people's expectations – or feeling responsible for them enjoying themselves over the Festive Season.

*I know from my own experience that sometimes it can be more stressful being a Christmas guest than a Christmas host, because you're not in your own home and I used to be good at feeling obliged to do what I thought was expected of me. All too often it was all in my head!*

Think for a moment about specific situations or tasks that stress you about Christmas and make a list of them here:

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Now you can focus on these specific points, as you make your way through the rest of this e-Guide. That's a great way to avoid getting overwhelmed!



4. **What** are you worried about?

The funny thing about worrying is that it never fixed anything.

Yet it's a habit that so many of us are addicted to.

Add a dollop of Christmas Stress to the mix and worrying takes on a whole new dimension.



The thing is that, when we're worrying, we get stuck in our head, going over and over and round and round the thing that may never happen.

The problem is that worrying about it means we're giving it so much attention that we actually make it more likely to happen.

**So what can we do instead?**

**Get active!**

If you spot yourself worrying, take a moment to stop and ask yourself:

**What could I do differently, so that this is no longer an issue?**

If it's something outside of your control, such as whether Auntie Beryl will argue with Grandpa, then you probably just have to let it go and book your ring-side seat.

But if it's something you *can* make a difference to, then taking even a baby step towards a solution can remove a tonne weight from your shoulders.

5. What's **your** Christmas baggage?

We all have baggage from Christmases past.

Whether it's memories of family events, embarrassment from yet another reindeer jumper or – in my Mum's case, dropping the Christmas turkey...!

The fact is that Christmas past doesn't have to spoil Christmas present.

But if we're dwelling on our Christmas baggage, then that's exactly what it will do.

What can you do instead?

**How about catching yourself in the act of dwelling on Christmas baggage and choosing to throw in the happier memories instead?**

**If you do that for just one minute (60 seconds, that's all!) it will immediately lift your mood, helping you to feel calmer and happier.**

How about giving it a go?





6. **What** are you creating?

We're all familiar about the cliché over wearing rose tinted glasses.

You can see it instantly with two people who have just fallen in love. It's like a haze around them, where they are blind to each other's quirks and annoying habits and life seems to be full of song-birds.

Similarly, come across someone in a bad mood and you can almost see the black rain cloud they're dragging along with them.

Our attitude towards what is going on around us is vitally important.

Whilst nobody is suggesting that Pollyanna or Scrooge had all the answers, it is interesting to see how their perspective on life moulded their experience.

If we focus on what's going wrong, we create more things going wrong.



If we focus on what's going right, we create more things going right.

So, no matter how stressed we are, we always have the choice to choose what we're creating...

7. **What** do you want instead?

Whatever you're doing right now, *don't* think of a blue donkey in a pink tree.

What happened?

Anyone out there who *didn't* imagine that donkey?

Why is that?

Because our unconscious mind – the bit that's running the show – finds it difficult to handle negatives. Tell it *not* to do something and it first has to imagine doing it and then add the "not". But by that point the damage is done.

The other problem is that your unconscious mind often finds it hard to tell the difference between something you're imagining and something that's really happening. That's why good memories feel so great when you re-live them.

So if we're spending all our time dwelling on what might go wrong and things that might not happen, our unconscious mind is creating the physical and emotional experience, as though they were actually happening right now.

To save yourself all that stress and bother, all you need to do is ask yourself one simple question:

**What do I want instead?**

I guarantee that using that as your Christmas Stress mantra will turn things around!



8. Remember what **Christmas** is really about for you.

Sometimes when we're drowning in our to-do lists or suffocating under a hoard of long-lost family visitors, it can be easy to forget why we're bothering.

Christmas can turn into 12 days of hard work, lost sleep, peace making, placating, stomach churning stress.

Yet one of the easiest ways to turn things around is to remember why we're doing it all.

By remembering the reason why, whatever it is we felt we had to do becomes something we choose to do. It's like it removes our resistance and things start to flow again.

To help you kick start this process, how about thinking about what Christmas is really about for you? Why are you bothering?

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9. **Create** your own personal de-stress strategies.

It's a physical fact that all of us have developed our own, personal de-stress strategies over the years – otherwise we'd all be climbing on the ceiling 24 hours a day.

The thing is that we often forget what they are.

Some of them might be as subtle as closing your eyes and going back inside to reach a point of inner calm. Others might take more time and involve a walk in nature or a candlelit bath.

Whatever your favourite de-stress strategies are, how about brain storming some of them now? By writing them down, you'll find they easily come to mind when you're stressed over the Christmas period.

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10. Decide "I'm going to enjoy this!"

It's a cold, frosty winter's morning and the school physical education teachers are huddling in their ski jackets in the staff room, while the rest of us make our grumpy way around the cross country course.

They'll pop out in time to meet us at the finish line, but we're far from impressed.

With every step our bodies are screaming objections to the task, yet we feel we have no choice.

Imagine the difference it might make if we simply accepted the way things were and decided to enjoy it?

Instead of focusing on the intense cold, we'd notice the patterns the frost was making on the leaves and perhaps even a bejewelled spider's web? We'd hear the crunch under foot and see the sun smiling gently from the clear blue sky.

And the run would be over before we knew it.

It's the same with Christmas stress.

If we fight it and make a fuss, it gets bigger.

If we just accept the way the things we can't change and choose to enjoy the ride, it can turn into a magical experience.

**Summary**

Christmas stress is very real for many people.

But there are so many things you can do to break out of old habits, go with the flow and even enjoy the process.

Hopefully this section has helped you understand your personal stress and de-stress strategies and given you some ideas for making changes.

Are you ready to move on to dealing with the number one Christmas stress complaint?

**How to find time for Christmas...**





I recently did a survey and asked people what was stressing them about getting ready for Christmas. The unanimous answer was “Not having enough time to get everything done”.

So this section includes 14 different ways you can reduce your Christmas stress and find more time to fit everything in.



## Finding The Time For Christmas



I recently did a survey and asked people what was stressing them about getting ready for Christmas and the unanimous answer was “Not having enough time to get everything done”.

So this section includes 14 different ways you can reduce your Christmas stress and find more time to fit everything in.

Enjoy!

### 11. How to prioritise

If you're anything like me, your to-do lists run to multiple pages most of the time.

I'm great at starting things but rubbish at finishing them (though I promise to finish this e-Guide for you!).

This leads me to a big problem – having too many things on the go at once. And they all feel like they're urgent.

So one of the easiest ways to create more time is to choose to do less.

Ok, I can hear the yells of objection already, but please just stay with me a moment!

Realistically, when it comes to Christmas, we take on too much.

Whether it's creating hand-made cards for everyone, creating a lavish 27 course Christmas lunch or arranging fresh rose petals on your guests' pillows...

Yet there will always be some things that are less important and they're the ones that need to keep bobbing around the bottom of your list, until you have more time (or till next year!).

Continued...



Here's a simple method to prioritise things:

Write out your to-do list.

Go through each item and *objectively* ask yourself whether it ranks as:

- A: MUST be done
- B: Very important, but less so than A and could wait till another day
- C: Honestly – a nice to have

Each day, do all of the A items for that day first, then the B items and finally the C items.



## 12. Have a clear-out / de-clutter

Have you ever noticed how difficult it is to be focused when you're surrounded by mess?

And rarely is that more true than when you are about to fill your home with Christmas decorations, guests and food.

One of the easiest ways to avoid Christmas overwhelm is to have a clear-out.

It needn't take more than a few hours and it can have the miraculous effect of giving you a calm and stable base from which to plan your Christmas adventures.

Go round your home and put away everything that shouldn't be lying around. If it doesn't have a "home", find it one!

Give your home a good clean before you put up the decorations.

If there's stuff you no longer need, bag it up and take it to the local charity shop or recycling centre.

Doing this *before* Christmas will make the next few weeks so much easier.



13. Finish one thing at a time

Ok, I have to confess that I am terrible at this one.

I love starting jobs, but I get very little satisfaction from finishing them. But not finishing them does cause me stress...

I'm very fortunate to know some wonderful people who are amazing at what psychologists call being a "completer-finisher" – in other words they get deep satisfaction from completing a project. So I've been able to see how much difference it can make to stress levels.

At Christmas, when you're likely to be taking multi-tasking to near-Olympian heights, finishing tasks is vital.

That means wrapping up the final present and then putting the paper away.

That means writing that final Christmas card address on the envelope and actually posting it, rather than leaving it languishing, guiltily, till January.

That means finishing one job before you start the next.

It might feel boring, but you'll quick learn to love the release you feel as you let the completed task go.

And it's only for Christmas!

14. Avoid common time stealers

You're in the middle of Christmas preparations and the phone rings. Half an hour later the kids demand a snack, then you spot the ironing, a few unpaid bills and catch up on your emails or Facebook. Before you know it the day has gone.

Time stealers are a fact of life.

No one is suggesting that the kids should stay hungry or that bills should fester. But you can be clever about how you manage these interruptions.

Sometimes delaying dealing with them for just 10 minutes can give you the space to finish a job and cut your stress.

Sometimes having set times each day to deal with emails / bills / phone calls can be a useful tactic.

What are your common time stealers and how could you deal with them, to cut your Christmas stress?

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15. Get multi-tasking

If you put your mind to it, it's amazing how effortlessly you can create more time by multi-tasking.

Are there any areas of "dead time" that you have during the day?

Could you make that quick phone call while you're cooking dinner?

Could you write those cards while you're watching TV?

Could you browse recipe books for your Christmas menu while the kids are doing their homework?

How could you make the most of multi-tasking, to make Christmas easier?



16. Plan ahead

This one sounds obvious, but if you're just days away from Christmas, then it might sound too late.

But it's never too late!

If you're stressed about everything you have to do, then planning ahead can take the emotions out of it and free up your time.

There's an old cliché:

"Fail to plan and you plan to fail."

Yet it's very true.

Now nobody is suggesting you should carry out your Christmas plan with military precision, but having at least an outline plan of what needs to be done when is a great way of helping you focus and also spot where you might need to ask for help.

And it makes sure you won't still be trying to buy parsnips and Brussels Sprouts on Christmas Eve...



17. Is there stuff you can put off till January?

Some things really will wait.

I know... We've all been there... Auntie Janice is coming and you really want the spare room to look its best, so you've set yourself the task of giving it a lick of paint and new curtains before she arrives.

But it's now seeming impossible, fights are breaking out over it at home and everyone is miserable.

Even if Auntie Janice is the kind of person who would pass comment on your existing colour scheme, does it really matter?

For the sake of your health and your enjoyment of Christmas, there are bound to be some things that will wait till January. Can you think of any???

18. Something's got to drop off the table

Perfectionism is a trait that runs through many of us and rarely more so than at Christmas.

It comes out in so many different ways, but it always has a common theme – it causes stress.

Whilst we might long to get Christmas absolutely perfect, if a few things drop off the table (metaphorically!), chances are no one will notice.

Are there any areas of your Christmas planning where you might be going a bit too far?

How about going back to Number 11 and doing some prioritising?



19. Split things into manageable chunks

We get overwhelmed when we look at what we need to do and see it as a mountain, looming over us.

Yet nobody leaps from base camp to the summit in one go.

Breaking things down into simple, bite-sized chunks can make a dramatic difference to your stress levels and your likelihood of actually getting them done!

Are there any aspects of your Christmas planning that could do with being split into manageable chunks?

20. Get organised

Doing things in bulk is a great way to create more time and finish things off.

For example:

Wrap all your presents in one evening and make an event of it, rather than doing a few each night and dreading it.

Do all your food shopping in bulk – then it's done. You could even shop online for it to be delivered or take advantage of counting sheep at 3 a.m. in the local supermarket.

Give yourself a set amount of time to do your Christmas shopping, rather than going back day after day for more...

How could you get more organised and streamline your Christmas?





21. Practise saying no!

Ok, so this one is a toughie for many of us.

Say no!

Yes, I said “say no!”

A friend of mine used to say, “If you want something to get done, give it to a busy person.”

And there’s an element of truth in that, unless the busy person is about to crack, in which case things get very messy.

So if you’re in the middle of everything and someone comes to you with yet another request, take a moment to stop and think about whether you really want to take it on. And if you don’t, play with politely, but firmly, saying no!

22. Are you panicking?

Are you panicking about Christmas? Too stressed to think straight?

Give yourself a break and go back to Number 9 and play with some of your personal de-stress strategies.

Or you could try simply writing down what you’re panicking about. That often helps you see the answers that will free you up to get on with things.

Usually the panicking takes more time than doing the things you’re panicking about.

But sometimes it still helps to enlist a good friend to listen for ten minutes and help you see a way forwards.





23. Timeline it

This exercise is simple, fun and effective.

1. Decide what the major goals are in your Christmas strategy (e.g. presents bought & wrapped, food bought, invitations sent, etc.)
2. Find a place where you can walk in a long, straight line.
3. Standing at one end of the line, look towards the far end, which is the end of Christmas.
4. Now slowly walk along the line, imagining each of the things you will have accomplished by that point in time, until you reach Christmas.
5. Go one step beyond Christmas and look back at the “now”. Notice everything you have achieved. How are you feeling?
6. Walk back from Christmas to “now”, noticing any points where you feel you might need more resources (patience, love, courage, time – whatever you need!) and stop at each of those points, to “give yourself” that resource.
7. Standing back in the “now”, how different are you feeling?

If any special points came up for you in this exercise, it can be great to write them down.

It's a lovely exercise to do each morning, to plan your day.

24. Learn how to relax

Being tense isn't just in your mind, it's in your body too.

It sends the body into “fight or flight” mode by engaging the sympathetic nervous system.

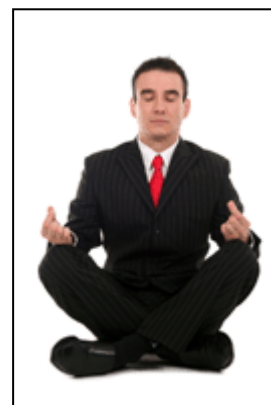
This means we can be running on adrenaline and creating massive stress for our bodies.

It's no wonder we feel stressed!

Learning how to relax, be it for a few moments or 20 minutes, can make a huge difference.

Make the most of the free bonus relaxation download that comes with this e-Guide.

It will help you de-stress, feel calmer, be more focused and even feel like you have more time!





## Conclusions

Hopefully this section has given you some useful ideas on how to literally create more time this Christmas.

If there are any of the strategies that you have found particularly useful, writing notes about them will help you remember them, whenever you're feeling stressed.

Are you ready to move on to the next section:

## Strategies For Staying Sane





# Strategies For Staying Sane

Christmas has a way of creating stress and drama that few other times of year can manage.

It sends us into super-stress faster than you could wink at a flying bat and keeps us there until long into the New Year.

So I thought it might be useful to share with you a whopping 28 strategies for staying sane this Christmas.



## Strategies for staying sane



Christmas has a way of creating stress and drama that few other times of year can manage.

It sends us into super-stress faster than you could wink at a flying bat and keeps us there until long into the New Year.

So I thought it might be useful to share with you a whopping load of strategies for staying sane this Christmas.

With that many to choose from, there's bound to be one that's perfect for you!

### 25. Don't forget to sleep

Duh! I hear you say...

But I'm being serious!

There's something about getting ready for Christmas that sends us into late-night mania. We discover that fitting in work, parties, presents and planning means we're not only burning the candle at both ends, we've discovered a way to burn it in the middle.

But even Santa only stays up once a year.

And you want to enjoy Christmas, don't you?

Getting enough sleep has to be a priority for at least some of the Christmas period.

Sure, there will be late nights, but making it a habit will quickly lead to you feeling exhausted, ratty, miserable and struggling to think straight.

So off you go! Time to get some shut-eye.





26. What to do if you're too stressed to sleep.

I regularly work with coaching clients who have this problem.

They lie awake, desperate to fall asleep, but their mind is racing and they simply can't switch off.

It doesn't matter how many different, supremely complicated relaxation techniques they try, *they can't get no sleep!*

One of the strategies I recommend to them is so simply yet highly effective:

If you're too stressed to sleep, write it all down, so you can let go of it till the morning.

If your mind is keeping you awake, it's only because it's finally got your attention and wants to make sure you remember everything it wants you to do.

Writing it down and committing to yourself that you'll deal with it when you're feeling refreshed in the morning is a great way to let go and switch off.

How about giving it a go?

27. Anticipate positively

If you expect the worst, then that's what you're likely to get.

You'll become acutely aware of anything that's not going to plan and you'll react to it disproportionately.

Yet that's the way most of us go when we're stressed.

Something as simple as anticipating the positive things that are going to happen will help you break that habit.



We're not talking Pollyanna here.

It's just about allowing the good bits to filter through, rather than just the doom and gloom.

How about catching yourself at it, one thought at a time? It's not about beating yourself up if that thought is negative. It's about choosing to follow it with a more positive one, until that becomes a new habit.

You'll be surprised at the difference it will make!



28. If you don't enjoy it, don't do it! OR see number 29...

If you're not enjoying something, don't do it!

Yes, I can hear you!

"But I have to!"

Do you? Really?

Couldn't someone else do it?

Does it really need to be done?

I'm just asking...

Still not sure? Then check out Number 29.

29. If you don't enjoy it, CHOOSE to enjoy it!

Does that sound a bit loopy?

Here's an example of how it can work:

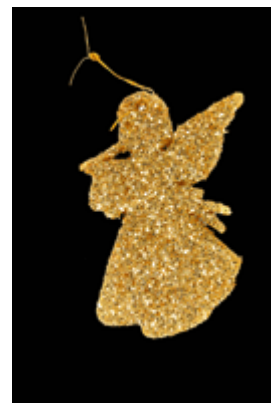
I don't much like taking out the compost.

It's not that I'm squeamish (though I am a bit, if I'm honest). It's more that it's mucky, smelly and a bit blurgh!

If I get myself into the state where I feel I *have* to do it, then I'm really good at grumbling my way through.

But if I turn things round and make it a game – something I can enjoy – then it seems to be over before I know it.

Are there any aspects of your Christmas planning that might benefit from the "choose to enjoy it" treatment?





30. Indulge in something that makes you feel good every day

When we're stressed, it's easy to forget to do things we enjoy – things that make us feel good.

Whether it's a short walk or listening to some music we love, doing even just 5 minutes of something we enjoy can recharge our batteries and help us feel calmer, more energised and happier.

If you're stuck for inspiration, how about checking out this wonderful Nina Simone video in the How To Feel Happier Club?

<http://howtofeelhappier.ning.com>

31. No one can *make* you feel stressed

Eleanor Roosevelt is quoted as saying:

*"No one can make you feel inferior, without your consent.."*

And the same goes for stress.

No one but you can make you feel stressed.

Sure, others can give you plenty of ammunition, but at the end of the day, it's always your choice.

For some people, that statement is obvious and intuitive, whilst for others it might be like running into a brick wall.

But it's a fact of life.

If you're stressed, you're doing it to yourself. And the great news is that it means you can undo it too. How about working through the rest of the steps in this section to create your own, personal de-stress strategies?





32. If what you're doing isn't working, do something different

It always makes me giggle whenever I get to London and see foreign visitors following someone who has used an Oyster card through the underground barriers.

The visitor will invariably take their tube ticket and place it on the Oyster card reader, expecting the barrier to let them through.

When it doesn't, they look confused and try again.

Only when someone comes to offer help do they learn that their ticket goes into the slot on the front of the barrier instead.

We even have a saying about it:

*"If at first you don't succeed, try, try, try again."*

But that only works if you get flexible.

If what you're doing isn't working and you keep doing it, it's likely to keep not working.

Doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results is clearly not rational, but it's something we're all very good at!

So if what you're doing isn't working, try doing something different...

Go on, I dare you!

33. Don't beat yourself up

Sometimes things don't work out quite the way you had planned – and Christmas is no exception.

So if you notice that you're starting to beat yourself up about something, how about giving that inner critic a break?

Send them on holiday?

Learning from your mistakes is important, but so is moving on and enjoying the present moment.

Even just turning off that inner voice for a few minutes might be the best gift you give yourself this Christmas!





**34. Don't sweat the small stuff**

Tony Robbins is famously quoted as saying:

*"Don't sweat the small stuff... and it's all small stuff."*

And there's a lot of truth in that.

If you're feeling seriously Christmas stressed, how about asking yourself if it really matters?

Imagine Christmas has been and gone and look back at the thing you're stressed about now. After Christmas, will it have mattered?

If yes, then do something about it.

If no, then how about letting it go?

**35. Getting grounded**

When we're stressed, it's all too easy to disappear off into our heads.

It's like we're floating around in our own little stress bubble.

One of the easiest ways to literally come back to earth is to get grounded.

1. Stand up straight, with your body relaxed.
2. Imagine roots are growing from the soles of your feet, deep into the ground.
3. Really feel them growing deeper and deeper, until you feel firmly anchored.
4. Take a deep breath in, expanding your belly to allow your diaphragm to work.
5. As you breathe out with a sigh, allow tension and worry to flow out through those roots and into the earth.
6. Repeat this for 3 breaths.

Notice how different you feel?





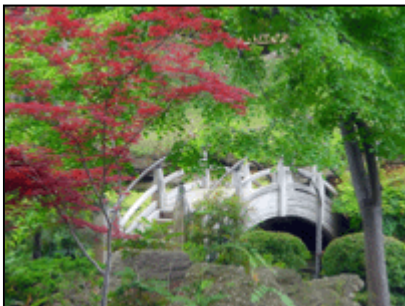
36. Take a hike & get some fresh air

When we're stressed, we tend to slouch and our breathing moves up to our upper chest and throat.

This means our body isn't getting enough oxygen and it makes everything more difficult.

Sometimes the simple action of going out for a walk can re-oxygenate your body and give you a fresh perspective.

It doesn't matter whether you live in a city or in the countryside and it doesn't have to be a full day's trek. Even just ten minutes of walking outside is enough to shift your mood and get things back into perspective.



37. Dance and sing

Personally, I love this one – though my neighbours probably don't.

If I'm feeling stressed, I love to put on my favourite music and dance and sing to my heart's content!

It only takes 5 minutes and it will shake up your body, get you breathing deeply and release endorphins into your blood stream, which are your body's way of helping you feel good.

If getting active is one of the ways you like to de-stress, then this will be a great one for you.

And even if it's not the kind of thing you'd usually do, how about giving it a go?



38. Stretch it out

Tension gets stored in our body and makes it hard to think straight.

If you don't have time for a walk or to get dancing and singing (Numbers 36 and 37), then some simple stretching can be enough.

Obviously, work within your own comfortable limits...

Start by stretching your arms above your head and giving a big yawn – your body's way of getting more oxygen in!

Then, if you're somewhere that you can stand up, increase the stretch through your back and your legs, building up to standing on your toes, if you can.

Clench your hands into tight fists and then release them. Do this a few times.

Finally scrunch your face up tight and let it go. Then open your eyes and mouth wide, to give them a good stretch – and let go.

Feeling better?

39. Drink some water

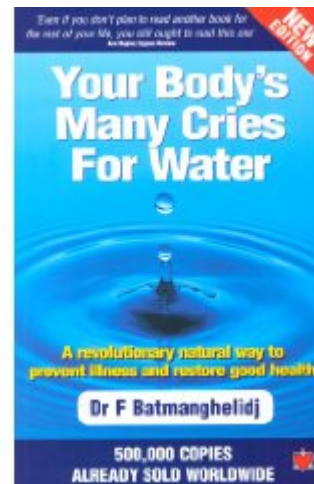
Dehydration has a massive impact on the body and most of us are dehydrated, most of the time.

How about turning things around for yourself over the Christmas period?



Even just adding an extra 3 or 4 glasses of water a day will make a tremendous difference.

If you'd like to find out more about how dehydration affects your body and mind, this is a really useful read:



<http://tinyurl.com/givemewater>



40. How are you sitting?

1. Take a moment to sit in a chair.
2. Now say out loud the phrase, "tired and weak" five times, really feeling it in your body.
3. Now try to stand up. Does it take a lot of effort?
4. Sitting down again, repeat 5 times the phrase, "Powerful and strong".
5. Now stand up.
6. Did you nearly shoot half way across the room?

The stories we tell ourselves in our minds don't just impact our emotions, they also impact our bodies.

And it works the other way, too.

So if you're feeling tired and fed up, try sitting up straight, putting a smile on your face and noticing the subtle difference that will instantly make.

41. Take a deep breath

Most of us breathe from our upper chest and throat, particularly when we're stressed.

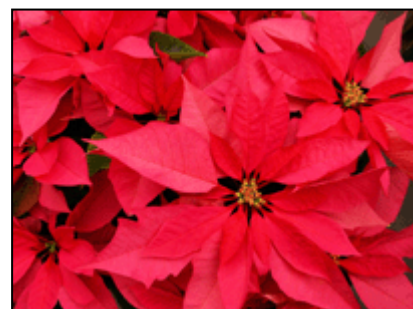
Yet our diaphragm is actually at the bottom of our rib cage and that's where our breathing movement comes from.

To re-energise yourself and de-stress, simply take a few breaths from your diaphragm area.

Allow your stomach to expand as you breathe in and get smaller as you breathe out.

Really feel the breath filling your whole lungs.

Doing this for just a few minutes will shift your mood and give you more energy.





42. Give yourself a hand / foot massage

Chinese medicine has long told us that there are acupressure points all over the body. Many other disciplines tell us the same.

But did you know that your hands and feet contain points that link directly to every part of the body?

So giving yourself a good hand or foot massage can create the same level of relaxation and well-being as a full body massage.

Just play with this one and see what works for you.

It's a great 5-minute pick-me-up.



43. Massage your ears!

Paul Dennison, founder of Brain Gym, advocates this exercise as a way to wake up your body and get everything moving again.

But be warned, it'll give you red ears for a while!

It works if you do both ears at once:

Use your finger tips to give your ears a massage. Start at the tops, gently uncurling the folds, and work your way round until you're tugging gently on your ear lobes.

Give your ears a stretch, pull, rub and general massage!

Do this for a couple of minutes and it'll leave you feeling invigorated and less stressed.



44. Keep things in perspective

Building mountains out of a mole hill?

Creating a storm in a teacup?

Whatever happens this Christmas, taking a step back, widening your perspective and giving yourself some space to see what's really going on will help you keep your stress levels down.

Keep stuff in perspective.

45. Moving on up (the emotional scale)

Sometimes when we're feeling fed up, stressed or down, we put ourselves under pressure to make a huge emotional leap from negativity to joy and bliss.

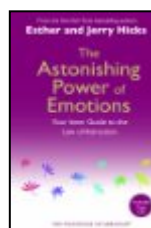
The problem with this is it isn't lasting. Yes, you can make a quantum leap, but you're likely to head back down that slippery ladder pretty fast.

You're much better off going up the emotional scale one run at a time.

And the great news is that it's much easier to do.

All you need to do is reach for a thought that makes you feel a little bit better. Then reach for another one. And another one. And you'll soon be moving on up that emotional scale.

Esther Hicks teaches this process beautifully in her book "**The Astonishing Power Of Emotions**" – an essential read for anyone who wants to feel happier more often!



<http://tinyurl.com/estherhicks>



**46. Smiling releases** endorphins

Frowning takes more muscles than smiling.

It's a proven biological fact.

Yet so many of us spend more energy frowning than smiling...



If you want to feel better fast, smile.

The cool bit is that it doesn't matter if you're faking it, when you start.

Just give a great big grin and start thinking about happier things. Keep it going for just over a minute and your body will release all the chemicals it would be releasing if you really were happy.

And the best bit is that these chemicals actually make you feel happy.

So smiling, even if you're down, will make you happy.

Isn't that something worth knowing?

**47. Shoulder shrug**

We store a huge amount of tension in our shoulders.

In fact, I often wonder whether mine are physically touching my ears...

This tension interrupts the free flowing of all the body's energy systems between the brain and the rest of the body and it can make us feel tired and low.

The easiest way to release this tension is to lift your shoulders right up to your ears (or as far as they'll comfortably reach!) and hold them there for a second, then let them drop down.

Do this 5 times and notice the difference.

It's a great de-stresser!



#### 48. What are your top 3 stress relievers?

Sometimes it's good to inspire others – and sometimes it's good to be inspired by others' ideas.



So if you have a some great stress-relievers that work for you, how about sharing them in the exclusive **How To Feel Happier Club** discussion thread for people who have read this e-Guide?

Joining the club is free, so how about getting chatting?

<http://howtofeelhappier.ning.com>

#### 49. Stare at a candle



There are usually plenty of candles around at Christmas.

And if you're really stressed and need a super-fast de-stress option, then the simple act of sitting still and gently allowing your focus to rest of the flame of a candle can bring you back to a place of inner calm that you might not have known you had!

It really is that easy!

If you find this technique works for you, then make sure you sign up for the Daily Sunshine meditation club mailing list, ready for its launch next year – see Number 50 for details.



### 50. Take up meditation – daily sunshine mailing list

If stress is a regular problem for you, then taking up a regular practice of deep relaxation or even meditation can make a tremendous difference.

And it's not all about turning yourself into a pretzel and chanting "om"!



We're going to be launching our How To Feel Happier Meditation Club next year and, if you'd like to be one of the first to find out about it, make sure you join our mailing list.

It's going to be called "**Daily Sunshine**". Sign up now!

<http://www.howtofeelhappier.com/blog/daily-sunshine/>

### Summary

Hopefully this section has inspired you to try out a few new ways of staying sane at times of stress.

Make sure you share your favourites at the How To Feel Happier Club discussion page. And you can share a few of your own, too!

Are you ready to deal with last minute stress for presents, cards and decorating?





And now we're moving into whistle-stop tour mode.

Christmas is nearly upon us and there's plenty still left to do.

So here are some fast and effective ways to dump the Christmas stress when it comes to presents, cards and decorating:



## Presents, Cards & Decorating



And now we're moving into whistle-stop tour mode.

Christmas is nearly upon us and there's plenty still left to do.

So here are some fast and effective ways to dump the Christmas stress when it comes to presents, cards and decorating:

### 51. Shop online

It's not too late! You can still get some great gifts online, but do watch out for the last Christmas posting dates.

Shopping online is a useful way to avoid the stress and queues.

### 52. Don't spend more than you can afford

You know you'll only regret it in the New Year. Yes, I know we all splurge a bit at Christmas, but try to resist the temptation.

Maybe there are areas where you could cut back without anyone noticing, so you can more easily afford those special treats?



### 53. It's not about how much you spend.

It's about the love that goes into choosing the present...

Try not to get trapped in the stress of "but I've given so-and-so something worth that much and I now have to buy something for their partner, worth the same amount."

It's not a competition.

Buy your gift (or make it!) with love and forget about the price. It's the love that counts.

And if it doesn't for that person, you probably shouldn't be buying them a present anyway...



54. Be organised

Christmas present shopping quickly gets out of control if you're not organised.

I'm sure you already have a list of what you're giving to whom? It's the easiest way to be sensible and not overspend, whilst avoiding the embarrassment of forgetting anyone...



55. Do you really want to send cards for Christmas?

My usual trick is to buy loads of Christmas cards and then realise the last posting date has passed and I haven't sent any!

I then end up feeling guilty and embarrassed.

But what if you're too stressed to get your cards done?

Well, you could do what one of my relatives does and write them in the summer, but I have to admit they're lacking a certain Christmas warmth...

Or how about sending Happy New Year cards instead?

Or not sending any at all and making a donation to charity, instead?

56. Get help with the decorating.

You don't have to do it all yourself.

And Christmas decorating can be really good fun, if you get the family involved.

My next door neighbours from when I was a kid create the most incredible Christmas Grotto in every room of their house.

They have a chorus of singing, bell-ringing monks, a full-sized laughing Santa and every wall and ceiling is covered in dark blue crepe paper, with thousands of delicate silver stars.



For kids, it really is quite magical. But it takes them so long to do!

Nowadays they use it to raise money for their local charities.

But you don't have to go that far.

If you're stressed, don't put yourself under pressure. Decide how much decorating you want to do, allot a time for it and enjoy it!





57. Do you really want to give Christmas presents?

Does that sound like a silly question?

There's a growing trend for people to give money to charity, instead of buying Uncle Jim yet another pair of dark grey socks.

Maybe that would work for you this year?



Friends of mine try a different tactic – they do all their Christmas shopping in the January sales and give people New Year presents instead.

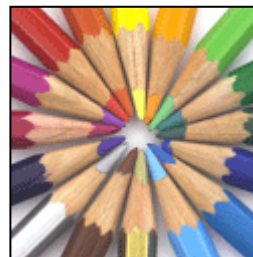
Just because there are expectations and traditions, it doesn't mean you have to follow them. If it's not working for you, then try something different.

Just make sure you warn people in advance, so they won't get grumpy!

58. Dealing with the credit crunch?

Money is tight for lots of us this year, so buying expensive (and potentially unwanted) gifts is a challenge.

How about getting creative, instead?



Make gifts or offering the gift a service, such as cooking dinner or babysitting, can be a great way of giving people something special, without maxing out your credit card.

And it's often more deeply appreciated than a shop-bought gift.

59. People want love, not presents

If you're really broke, really stressed or just plain fed up with present shopping, remember that people want love, not presents.

Is there another way you can show them how much you care?



60. Believe people when they say they don't want presents

A friend of mine mentioned this one – and it's tricky.

Each year, someone in the family will decide they've either got too much clutter or they would rather make a charitable gesture and they'll announce they're "not doing presents this year."

That's all well and good until you're sitting round the Christmas tree, gleefully unwrapping everyone else's gifts and the "not doing presents" person's face is slowly dropping.

You get the impression they didn't really mean it and they would really have loved a present.

So you're stuck.

You did what they asked, but now you're riddled with guilt.



**What's the answer?**

Well, that's up to you. But if they made the decision that they didn't want presents, then that's a choice they chose to make. It's not up

to you to make them feel better, if they're regretting it.

But you can still make sure they feel special and loved by making a fuss of them and showing them you care.

61. [www.buynothingchristmas.org](http://www.buynothingchristmas.org)

This is a useful website, packed with ideas of what to do if you don't want to buy anything this Christmas.

It's got a lively discussion forum, too.

So if you're stuck for ideas, how about checking it out?

<http://www.buynothingchristmas.org/alternatives/index.html>



**62. Just make a decision!**

Going round and round in circles, struggling to figure out what to buy for everyone? How about just making a decision?!

Then stick to it.

Finding their dream present could be done at your leisure in time for their birthday...

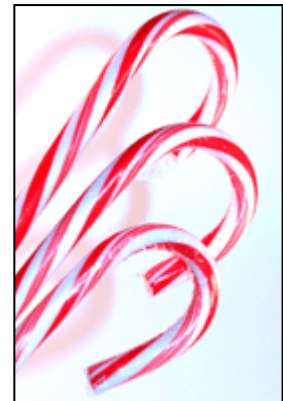
Let go of your perfectionism just a teeny weeny bit will do wonders for your stress levels.



**63. Don't do it all on your own**

There's a good reason why Santa has a team of Elves to help!

Even if asking for help isn't your usual style, how about making an exception this Christmas?



**Summary**

Whatever your challenges around presents, decorating or Christmas cards, hopefully this section has provided you with some inspiration.

Are you ready to move on to the next step...

**Christmas Entertaining**



So your Christmas festivities are here and whether you're the host or a guest, it can be a stressful time.

Here are some tried and tested ideas for keeping your cool about Christmas Entertaining.



## Christmas Entertaining



So your Christmas festivities are here and whether you're the host or a guest, it can be a stressful time.

Here are some tried and tested ideas for keeping your cool about Christmas Entertaining.

### 64. Shop ahead

I still have vivid memories of my mother phoning the manager of the local supermarket, trying to beg parsnips on Christmas Eve. Somehow she did actually get them, but she was lucky!

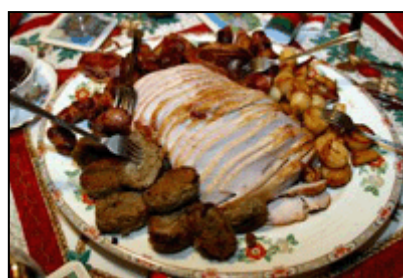
If you're entertaining at Christmas, it's a fine balance between buying ahead and keeping things fresh.

Whatever you do, don't leave it till the last minute or you'll be doing a Christmas lunch of beans on toast...

### 65. Plan a menu that will work for everyone

That way you don't end up cooking 5 different meals, which is a recipe for super-stress.

Of course, there will always be the random vegetarians (me!), those with wheat intolerances and the plain old faddy eaters, but if you can, try to create a menu that allows you to offer the same dish to as many of your guests as possible.



Check out Christmas recipe books for plenty of ideas.

<http://tinyurl.com/christmasrecipeideas>

And if you're a Christmas guest with special food requirements, please do the decent thing and let your host know as soon as you can. With everything else they've got going on, it's not fair to expect them to remember that you don't like blue cheese.

And you might even want to offer to bring some of your own food, if you think that would help.





66. Check ahead for anyone with allergies

A few years ago I threw a dinner party to celebrate a friend's birthday.

I spent the day cooking everything from a veggie lasagne to the most incredible panna cotta.

Everything was going brilliantly until I was serving up the lasagne (blue cheese and pine nut, with extra cheese on top...) and I suddenly remembered that one of the girlfriends had a cheese allergy.

I can't actually remember how I rescued the situation – I suspect I have deleted it from my memory banks due to the pain of the embarrassment – but it taught me never to assume that guests will be able to eat what I cook. (And that's not just my culinary skills!)

So check ahead for anyone who might have allergies...

67. Alcohol & caffeine – less is more

Alcohol and caffeine (tea, coffee, hot chocolate, lots of fizzy drinks) will dehydrate you and make you tired and tense.

If you want to avoid that, all you need to do is drink a glass of water between each drink.



68. What are you eating?

Christmas is usually a time to indulge and the research on how many calories we can consume over the festive period is frightening.

But it's not only the calories that are the problem.

Most of our Christmas food is laden with sugars or chemicals that our body needs to detox, which takes energy.

Eating some extra portions of fresh fruit and veg will supply you with enough antioxidants help your body process any extra toxins from those Christmas sweets and sherries.



69. Eating the wrong stuff will make you tired and stressed.

Higher than usual levels of salt, sugar, caffeine and alcohol will leave you feeling tired and stressed.

It's Christmas, so obviously you're going to want to enjoy your food, but if you notice you're getting really sluggish, cutting out the salt, sugar and caffeine for a bit will help.

70. Up your Omega oils

There's a proven link between Omega oils and brain function.

Most of us are already low on these essential nutrients and party season is a time when we need them most.

So to keep yourself feeling good, you might want to consider supplementing your diet.

Talk to an expert at your local health food shop for advice.

71. If everyone hates Brussels Sprouts, don't cook them!

Just because something is traditionally eaten at Christmas, it doesn't mean you have to cook it.

If your family hates sprouts, don't serve them. It's really not worth the stress of force feeding them to the kids or even Grannie, if it's something they don't like.

The same goes for bread sauce, stuffing or any other component of your traditional Christmas lunch.

Alternatively, it could just be that you need some new recipe inspiration.

How about checking out our favourite recipe website for the results of their recent Brussels Sprouts recipe competition:

<http://www.vegbox-recipes.co.uk>





72. Christmas is about creating memories

Christmas is about creating memories of wonderful experiences, whatever the food, not about wonderful food, whatever the experience.

Does that help you keep things in perspective?

73. Peel & slice the night before

Whether you're cooking for 4 or 40, peel and slice the night before.

Anything that can be done in advance should be done in advance.

Enlist help!

Create a list of timings for the big day.

Then you'll be freeing yourself up to enjoy being the host, rather than feeling like a slave in the kitchen.

And if you're a guest, don't stand on ceremony – offer to help! People rarely ask for it, especially when they need it most.

**Summary**

Do you have even more ideas about how to de-stress Christmas Entertaining?

How about sharing them via the special discussion page on the How To Feel Happier Club?

<http://howtofeelhappier.ning.com>

Hopefully this last section has helped.

Are you ready to start de-stressing The Big Day?



It's the big day and, whether you're the host or being entertained, there are some great things you can do to make sure the only "bang" in your Christmas festivities comes from the crackers.



## The Big Day



It's the big day and, whether you're the host or being entertained, there are some great things you can do to make sure the only "bang" in your Christmas festivities comes from the crackers.

### 74. Create a big "to do" list

Make sure you know what needs to be done when.

By writing it down, it means you don't have to remember it all, so you can de-stress a bit.

Plus it makes it easier to see how you could share the load and assign some tasks to others.

### 75. Be a peace maker

If Grandma and Great Uncle Max normally row, then chances are they'll continue the tradition at Christmas.

Even if everyone is on their best behaviour, there is bound to be some friction or minor tension.

Instead of worrying about it and trying to keep everyone happy, how about assuming the role of peace maker?

It's not about getting stuck in the middle or taking sides. It's about helping everyone to stay calm and happy, so that tensions don't escalate.

### 76. Dare to wear your rose-tinted glasses

This one can be really good fun.

If you spend the day wearing your rose-tinted glasses – choosing only to see the positive things that are going on – you can literally shift the mood so that everyone goes with you.

Just imagine that!

It could help you make this one the best Christmas ever.



77. Ask others to be honest about what they want to do – then believe them.

I often hear people saying they feel stressed about making sure everyone has a good time at Christmas.

Yet people don't like to ask for what they really need – or tell others what they really want to do.

Christmas can end up being a time of compromises, where no one really enjoys themselves and everyone is doing what they think everyone else expects of them.



The easy way out of this is to ask others to be honest about what they want to do – and then believe them.

If they're not telling you the truth, that's their problem, not yours.

78. Be realistic – do you really want a saccharin-sweet family Christmas?

The television and magazines portray images of family Christmases where everyone gathers round the tree, singing carols, and the food miraculously appears from the direction of the kitchen, as though prepared by house elves.

But it rarely works out that way.

So my invitation to you this Christmas is to tell yourself:

“Everything is just right, even if it goes wrong. And that's ok.”

79. Whatever happens, look for the silver lining

No matter what goes on with your Christmas festivities, look for the silver lining.

There always is one.

**If you're leading the way doing this, you'll help everyone else enjoy their Christmas more, too.**



80. Kill them with kindness

So it's got to the stage where they're driving you mad and, quite frankly, you'd like to recycle them along with the wrapping paper.

What's the answer, to help you regain your Christmas cool?

My Nanna used to call it "killing them with kindness."

Basically, keep being kind.

Even if you want to yell, keep being kind.

Not fake, pretend kindness, but real, genuine kindness.

It's the fastest way to neutralise a confrontational situation and it will help you feel much happier.

Want to know more?

<http://tinyurl.com/kindnessblog>

81. It's not a competition



It really isn't a competition – I promise you. And no one can force you into a competition.

No matter what your mother-in-law created last year, it's not the Olympics, and there are no medals for creating a "better Christmas" than anyone else's.

People will remember the love with which Christmas was created much more than the actual things that happened.

82. You're not responsible for whether others enjoy themselves

Everyone else can choose to be miserable – if they want.

Or they can choose to be happy.

We all know someone who will lurk in the corner armchair, looking glum, whether they're surrounded by laughter or tears.

The fact is that, whilst you can be a great host, it's ultimately up to your guests whether they choose to make the effort to enjoy themselves.

That's entirely their choice.

So how about letting yourself off the hook?



83. Spread a little happiness

The Seven Dwarves used to tell us to “whistle while you work” and they certainly seemed to be happy chappies.

You can set an example to inspire others by simply choosing to feel happy, whatever you’re up to over Christmas.

That’s the quickest way to spread happiness.

By you feeling happy, you’ll inspire them to feel happy.

And perhaps that’s one of the greatest gifts you could give them?



84. You can’t change others, but you *can* change how you respond

Ok, I’m hearing the objections again.

It took me a long, long time to get my head round this one, but it’s true – sorry.

There is nothing at all on this planet that you can do to physically change someone else’s behaviour.

Yes, you can provide plenty of incentive, but ultimately there is no way you can actually get them to behave in the way you believe they should.

It’s up to them.

But if you want to influence them, to encourage them towards behaviour that you feel might work better, the easiest way is to change how you’re responding to them.

If they’re tense and angry, your automatic response might be to feel tense and angry back. You’re keeping the cycle going, like a dance.

But if you choose to respond differently, they’ll quickly get the message that the dance has changed and they’re then more likely to change their behaviour.

How about trying that one on for size?



85. Focus on what goes well

I have to confess that, over 20 years on, I still vividly remember my mum dropping the turkey on Christmas morning.

And it still makes me chuckle (sorry – mum).

But the other thing I also remember about that morning is that she didn't let it ruin the day.

She could have stormed off to her room and cried all day, but she just pulled herself together, had a Sherry and got on with creating a wonderful Christmas.

And no matter what dramas unfold in your Christmas this year, focusing on what goes well, rather than anything that went wrong, is a brilliant way to keep things in perspective and create memories that people will treasure for years.

86. Take time out for yourself

“Frazzled” is an adjective you often hear from Christmas hosts.

If you think you're on your way there, it's up to you to delegate things to someone else so you can take some time out.

Even if that's just hiding in the bathroom and doing some deep breathing for 5 minutes, it's essential that you keep recharging your batteries.

And it's a great example to teach those around you.

**87. Ask for help – don't be a Christmas martyr!**

You're ready to drop, but you're still peeling potatoes and basting the joint.

Then you serve the meal, clear up and start to wash up, while everyone else is relaxing at the table, too full of Christmas pudding to move a muscle.

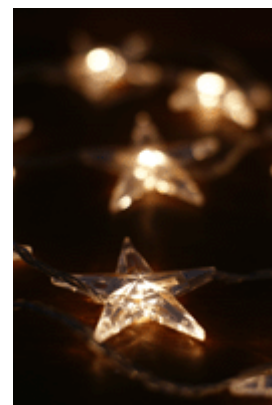
Why are you doing it?

Isn't it someone else's turn?

Being a Christmas martyr doesn't just wear you out, it sets a poor example to others that you're there to do all the work.

Would you rather swallow your pride and ask for help, so you can enjoy things, too?

Doing everything by yourself doesn't prove to your family that you love them. It just proves to them that you feel you have to do it all yourself.





88. “Slippery Shoulds” – who says?

A friend of mine is a fellow NLP (Neuro-Linguistic Programming) Trainer and he introduced me to the idea of “Slippery Shoulds”.

Basically, the word “should” is one I do my best to avoid.

It is all about doing things that you kind of don’t really want to do and would wriggle your way out of, if you thought you could.

To me, it’s even worse than “have to”. At least “have to” implies you feel you have zero options. “Should” implies that you aren’t quite convinced that you have to, but you’re going to anyway – or that you’re basing the decision on what you think others expect.

My usual response to should (nowadays), to avoid that sinking feeling of obligation, is to ask myself:

*“Who says?”*

It’s an easy way to challenge assumptions and you might be surprised how often the “should” task can then conveniently disappear.

**89. If you’re a guest, offer to help. Ask for a job.**

Christmas can be a great time to relax, particularly if life is usually pretty stressful for you.

But it can also make you feel guilty, chilling out in the other room, sipping the Christmas sherry, while your host is slaving away.

If in doubt, ask for a job. Be firm, but don’t insist.

If there’s something you can do to help, then take the weight off your host’s shoulders.



**90. Let others get involved!**

Moving on from Number 89, if you’re the host and someone offers to help, let them!

People genuinely want to help. And if they don’t and they’re only pretending, then that serves them right anyway!

So if offers of help come your way, make the most of them!



**91. Speak your truth – with compassion!**

What's this one all about?

Well, Christmas parties are great places for resentment to build up.

People tend to do and say what they think others want to see and hear, rather than speaking up and being honest.

So whether you're a guest or a host, I invite you to speak your truth – be honest – but with compassion!

It's not about reducing Auntie Mabel to tears! But it is about being genuine. And you might be surprised at the difference it will make.



**92. Others' expectations are just that.**

What others expect will happen and how they expect things to be done are just expectations.

They're not laws, they're not rules, they're not requirements.

So if what they are expecting isn't working for you, be honest about it and tell them. There's bound to be a workable compromise.

**93. Create your own traditions**

I didn't even think about this one until after my son had been born and we hosted our first family Christmas.

It suddenly occurred to me that the way our childhood family Christmases had run wasn't going to work for me. We used to open presents in the morning, then my sister and I would play with them while the "grown ups" slaved in the kitchen. As a young child, the family aspect of Christmas often got lost in the excitement of the presents.

So we created a new tradition of focusing on the meal, then opening presents when we were all ready.

Whatever you think might work for you, how about trying it out this year?

Don't be afraid to tweak things!





94. Don't battle on regardless.

If you're tired, stressed or just plain not enjoying it, change what you're doing and ask for help.

Just because it's Christmas, it doesn't mean you have to battle on regardless. In fact, it's the best reason not to.

Christmas is for you, too! So give yourself the chance to enjoy it.



**95. Use your camera to capture happy memories**

This is a simple Christmas de-stressing technique.

If you give yourself the task of capturing happy memories on camera, then your attention will focus on spotting the happy events and you'll automatically put on your rose-tinted glasses.

If your usual Christmas stress strategy is to worry about people not getting on and things going wrong, then this strategy might make a huge difference for you.

**96. Open presents slowly**

You've put so much effort into choosing and wrapping presents, yet the paper is often off before you could say "Ho, ho, ho!"

Making sure the family takes time to enjoy opening presents and appreciate the gifts can create a wonderful atmosphere at Christmas.





97. Sort wrapping and recycling as you go

It wasn't until several days later, after the bin men had been, that Mum realised her Christmas ear rings weren't in the box...

We never found them...

And it taught us a major lesson about Christmas stress:

Sort out the wrapping paper and recycling as you go along and assign one person to be responsible for checking that there are no presents lurking in the rubbish!



98. Avoid politics & religion

If you want a peaceful Christmas, do the obvious, and avoid talking about controversial topics.

Every family has its fair share of subjects that cause rows, but politics and religion are always best avoided, too!

And if you spot anyone getting into an argument, how about going over and gently changing the subject?!

99. Don't over-hype the kids

It might seem impossible to achieve this one. I still remember my little sister and I crawling through the obstacles that Father Christmas had set up in front of the door to the room where the presents had been laid out – at 3 in the morning...

Yet over-hyped kids are a recipe for Christmas disaster.

Make sure they are eating something (at least vaguely healthy) at regular intervals and that they're not getting dehydrated.

Open presents slowly and try to set up calm intervals during the day.

Good luck!



100. Flexibility & compromise

Christmas is all about being flexible. And compromising.

The Queen's Speech is a classic example. Most of us have a Marmite-style love / hate thing about it. If half the family want to watch it, let them. If the other half don't, then don't force them. Let them do something else in another room.



What are the potential compromises you could pre-empt for this Christmas? And how could you make sure they won't be a problem?

So that's the end of our 101 Ways To A Stress Free Christmas.

I really hope you have found some useful ideas as you have read through this e-Guide.

101. Have fun!

If you'd like to share your experiences, please do get involved with the (free!) How To Feel Happier Club discussion board:

And finally...

<http://howtofeelhappier.ning.com>

This is one that's so easily forgotten!

Wishing you and yours a wonderful, stress-free Christmas and a year full of happiness and laughter in 2009!

Christmas is a time to have fun.

To finish off, how about writing down 3 ways you plan to have fun this Christmas?

Love,

1.

Clare x

2.

3.



### What's Next?

The 101 ways to de-stress in this e-Guide can be applied at any time of year.

And, of course there are many other ways to feel happier - that's the whole point of the How To Feel Happier website!

If you want to take your journey further, you could:



Check out the How To Feel Happier website.

<http://www.howtofeelhappier.com>

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### And Finally...

What did you think of this guide? You can share your thoughts and experiences via the club – there's a special discussion thread for people who have worked through this e-Guide.

<http://howtofeelhappier.ning.com>

So if it has helped you – or if you have suggestions for improvements, or even questions, please pop by and share! I look forward to seeing you there.

Thank you and wishing you sunshine and smiles,

Clare

Clare Josa, HowToFeelHappier.com