

# 10 Ways to Unstress this Christmas

'Tis the season to be jolly... yeah right! We all know that Christmas often turns out to be a mad rush and stressier than a squirrel that's lost its nuts so here are a few tips for unstressing this Christmas.

1. Do a little bit at a time. It's so very tempting to say I'll get round to it nearer the time but before you know it... Make a list of what needs to happen, (prioritising the list from most important to least important is even better but for the real planners amongst us) and then do one thing every day.
2. Share out the work. Once you have a list in place, share out some jobs. Don't be fooled into that 'if I don't do it myself it won't get done properly trap' - who cares as long as it's done and you haven't had to do it!
3. Don't be tempted to try to impress. Try to remember that Christmas is not meant to be a competition! Ask yourself who am I trying to better? Often it's our own need to create the best possible impression that drives us but be kind to yourself – perfection comes at a high price.
4. Believe in good enough. Banish any storybook scenarios from your brain about how Christmas should be if it involves you running around being exhausted. Conjure up another set of images where everyone is sharing the workload while still smiling because things are good enough!
5. Running out of time. Accept that. There's no point in pushing to the point of collapse. Now you will have to prioritise and then accept that you have done all you can.
6. Confidently say 'no'! Claim back the power of 'no' without feeling guilty. Putting yourself and your needs to the forefront is the only way to make sure you stay sane. Say 'no' and mean it. Don't let anyone foist their last minute jobs on you.
7. Be realistic. Things don't always go to plan. Illness, weather, people have a habit of doing things differently. Think through last minute changes and chat through possible choices with someone close. You may come up with a better alternative together which will save the day and stop the stress.
8. Play wonderfully cheerful Christmas music and take time off for meditation and relaxation. Practise calm, conscious breathing and diaphragmatic breathing.
9. Print off the Christmas visualisation and get someone to read it to you (or record it on a CD) while playing relaxation music in the background.
10. Smile at everyone and cheerfully wish them a Merry Christmas!