

DECEMBER

THE THERAPY Connection

A newsletter for our valued patients & friends.

TIP OF THE MONTH

Coping with Holiday Stress

It's the holidays, and with all of that joy and celebrating comes expectations and obligations. For some of us, the holidays can be a stressful time of year. So, to help curb the panic attacks, we have compiled a list of amazingly easy stress reducing techniques.



LISTEN TO CLASSICAL MUSIC: When overwhelmed, take a break from the carols and listen to relaxing classical music. Playing calm music has a positive effect on the brain and body. It can lower blood pressure and reduce cortisol, a hormone linked to stress.

CALL A FRIEND: If overwhelmed, take a break and call a friend and talk about what's on your mind. A reassuring voice can be calming and put everything into perspective. Also, helping someone else is a good antidote.

TALK YOURSELF THROUGH IT: If you can't call a friend, talking to yourself can be the next best thing. You are not silly, just tell yourself why you are stressed out, what you have to do to complete the task you are working on, and that everything will be okay. This is an excellent way to pass the time spent when looking for parking spaces.

BREATHE EASY: "Take a deep breath" is not a cliché. For an easy 3-5 minute exercise, sit up in a chair with your feet flat on the floor and hands on top of your knees. Breathe in and out slowly and deeply, concentrating on your lungs as they expand fully in your chest. Deep breathing oxygenates your blood, helps center your body, and clears your mind, while shallow breathing causes stress.

LAUGH IT OFF: Laughter is healing and releases endorphins that improve mood and decrease levels of the stress-causing hormone cortisol and adrenaline. Laughter tricks our nervous system into making us happy.

TRY TEA: Say no to the Frappuccino and try a nice cup of green tea. It has less than half the caffeine of coffee and contains healthy antioxidants as well as theanine - an amino acid that has a calming and soothing effect on the nervous system.

SLEEP BETTER: Stress can cause you to lose sleep. Lack of sleep is also a key cause of stress. This cycle causes the body to get out of whack and only gets worse with time. Try turning the TV off early and keep electronic devices off too. If you do want to watch a little television, stay away from negative news and tune in to the Hallmark channel for a feel good holiday movie.

EXERCISE: When you exercise, your body releases endorphins and a protein called BDNF. These together reduce pain and increase happiness levels. A quick 20 minutes can really do the trick.

For more information about stress and tips on how to overcome it, [click here](#). We hope that you and yours have a wonderful stress-free holiday season!

Call today to ask us how we can help you get back to enjoying the activities that are important to you!



"The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt with the heart. Wishing you happiness"

— Helen Keller

TELL A FRIEND

The greatest compliment we can receive is for our patients to tell their friends and family about their positive experience with us. If you know someone who is experiencing pain or limitations and you believe they could benefit from therapy, please tell them about us.

We will ensure that they will receive great care and have a positive therapy experience with us!

A RECIPE FOR YOU

Nana's Chocolate Pudding

We try to keep things healthy, but for the holidays, we thought we could indulge a little. This month, we have Nana's Chocolate Pudding, given to us by our friend Leah. The recipe makes 10, half cup servings.



Ingredients:

- 7 oz dark chocolate
- 2 cups whole milk (divided use)
- 1 cup heavy cream
- ¾ cup sugar
- ¼ cup cocoa
- ¼ cup salt
- ¼ cup cornstarch
- ¼ cup butter
- ¾ tsp vanilla extract

Directions:

1. Chop chocolate into fine pieces.
2. Combine chocolate and 1 ¾ cups of milk, cream, sugar, cocoa and salt into a large saucepan. Stir well using whisk over medium heat until it's thick and smooth.
3. Mix remaining ¼ cup milk and cornstarch together to create paste, whisk into the chocolate mixture.
4. Simmer for a minute, whisk and scrape the sides down with a spatula. Add butter and cook for 1 minute. Stir in vanilla extract.
5. Store in refrigerator in airtight container with plastic wrap touching the surface of pudding to prevent a skin from forming.
6. As a treat, drizzle a spoonful of caramel sauce or whipped cream onto pudding and serve.



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