

Tips for Taming Holiday Pain

by [Teri Robert, PhD](#)

Few things can take away from enjoying holidays like pain can. Annoying at worst, totally debilitating on the other end of the scale, pain leaves its mark on family gatherings, holiday parties, religious celebrations, virtually all aspects of the holidays. While there's no fool-proof answer for stopping pain and its impact on the holidays, steps can be taken to reduce episodes of pain or at least reduce its impact.



1. Pay attention to your medications:
 - a. Be sure to refill your medications when the refills are available so you have plenty on hand. This will also help avoid situations where you've forgotten to get a new prescription.
 - b. Take your medications on time. Set an alarm clock as a reminder if necessary.
 - c. If you're going out, be sure to take necessary medications with you.
2. Don't skip sleep; get enough rest. Being tired can greatly exacerbate pain. Be sure to get plenty of sleep at night and rest during the day if you need to.
3. Don't skip meals, and eat well. There are usually lots of culinary goodies around, but don't skip meals, and keep an eye on nutrition.
4. Plan and delegate.
 - a. Make lists of what you want to get done and use them.
 - b. Delegate the tasks you can. Split up what needs to be done and engage everyone's help. If the ribbons on those packages are less perfect because you delegate the wrapping of presents, who cares?
5. Stay hydrated. Be cautious about caffeine and alcohol consumption since both can contribute to dehydration.
6. Take some quiet time for yourself. Stress can make pain worse or even bring on some types of pain. Crazy schedules, extra people in your home, and other holiday strangeness can be very stressful. Taking quiet time for yourself every day can help reduce your stress levels. Meditate, listen to music, take a nap or a bubble bath – do what you need to do to be good to yourself.
7. "Don't sweat the small stuff." Stop and think about what's really important. It's not the perfectly cooked turkey, the perfectly decorated house, or the perfect anything. It's the time spent with people you care about that makes holidays special. People whose opinions are worth caring about won't mind if everything isn't "perfect."

What else can you think of to reduce the likelihood of your having pain issues during the holidays? Take some time to consider that question and add to this list of tips. Keep the list handy. Share it with family and friends. Taking care of yourself will improve the holiday season for you and for those around you.

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