

# 10 tips to survive the holidays

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# HOLIDAY SURVIVAL TIPS

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**There is rarely more pressure for perfection than the holidays. Between completing your own preparations -- cooking, cleaning, and shopping -- and meeting your social obligations to family and friends, it is easy to spread yourself too thin.**

The holidays should be about sharing joy with those you love, not tearing your hair out. Dr. Steven Rosenberg, Philadelphia-based therapist [www.quititnow.com](http://www.quititnow.com) offers some solutions for lowering your [stress](#) level and raising your level of holiday enjoyment. Bonus: following this checklist will improve your most important relationships beyond

the holiday season.

## HOLIDAY SURVIVAL TIP #1

**Exercise your right to put your household first.** Most holiday stress comes from trying to fulfill obligations to others. You have the right to put the health and comfort of yourself, your spouse and your children first, and not accept added responsibilities.

## HOLIDAY SURVIVAL TIP #2

**Alternate holidays with different branches of the family.** You can't be in two places at once. Map out where you will be and when far ahead of time so the grandparents aren't left unexpectedly home alone, and change it up each year to spread the wealth.

## HOLIDAY SURVIVAL TIP #3

**Explain the arrangements you plan to follow clearly and early to everyone involved.** Devise a schedule, inform your relatives, and stick to it.

## HOLIDAY SURVIVAL TIP #4

**Don't be afraid to change a tradition.** There is no law that says you can't have a small Thanksgiving dinner at home, then celebrate at your in-laws on Saturday.

## HOLIDAY SURVIVAL TIP #5

**Celebrate with flexibility.** Try new, neutral locations, like a family holiday [trip](#) to a new resort. Start new rituals, and don't be afraid to let go of old ones if they remind you of a parent's death or divorce.

## HOLIDAY SURVIVAL TIP #6

**Give your kids and spouse your attention, too.** The holidays should include special time for just your little family -- don't let others hog all your energy.

## HOLIDAY SURVIVAL TIP #7

**Decline some invitations.** Don't be afraid to say no, or shorten the length of a visit, if you can't fit everything in.

## HOLIDAY SURVIVAL TIP #8

**Lower your expectations -- especially if you are the hostess.** The purpose of a party is to be together and have fun; holidays are not Martha Stewart entertaining contests.

## **HOLIDAY SURVIVAL TIP #9**

**Spell out the rules for your children and ask relatives to follow them.** Remind grandparents that you are the one who has to deal with the problems they create by sneaking the kids sweets late at night, ignoring bedtimes and buying them forbidden toys.

## **HOLIDAY SURVIVAL TIP #10**

**Divide available time between sets of grandparents as fairly as possible.** If one set lives too far away to visit often, keep them feeling connected with frequent [phone calls](#), emails and photographs. If you and the far-away grandparents join Skype, you could even share a holiday dinner together on the web!