

Get Organized and Avoid Holiday Stress

By Jackie Murphy

There are only 24 hours in a day. We all know it's a tough job to keep balanced with careers, family obligations, community involvement and other responsibilities. Our "TO DO" lists grow as fast as you cross items off. "Too much to do and not enough time" is a familiar expression on an everyday basis. With the holiday season upon us, the jingle of hustle and bustle adds to our stress. There are holiday parties, pitch-ins, open houses, drop-in visitors, children's activities, decorating, shopping, party and meal planning, holiday cards to be mailed, gifts to wrap, and the list goes on and on. But you don't have to be overwhelmed or traumatize yourself with unnecessary stress! Take a deep breath; there are ways to enjoy the holiday season!

Make sure you have all known dates written on your calendar: Friends' parties, open houses, and company holiday party, pitch-ins and family gatherings. You also want to calendar church events, volunteer activities, children's holiday activities & events. Don't forget travel dates & times, postal deadlines, and arrival of out-of-town family or guests.

Check your vacation balances at work. Many companies do not allow paid time off of vacation and floating holidays to carry over from year to year. Your company's policy may be "use it or you lose it." Check with your H.R. Department for any remaining available paid time off. Schedule this time to take care of planned events, shopping, or finish last minute details.

Sending out holiday cards or invitations to friends or family? Don't get writer's cramp! Set a deadline to have items ready for mailing. If you are sending out 50 items, split the task up. Set aside 1 or 2 hours 2 or 3 evenings to sign, address and attach postage to all cards and invitations.

Be time conscious. Know the busiest times at the post office, grocery, department store, etc. and plan accordingly. Try to anticipate the busiest times for crowds. If you know the places you need to go are hectic at a certain time, you may encounter long lines or parking will be impossible avoid being there at that time. Busiest times are lunch hours and after dinner time. Run your errands at in-between times or when you know the crowds might be thinner.

Many online merchants offer "free shipping" and "delivery in time for Christmas" if ordering by a certain date. Although it's gratifying to come home with a fistful of shopping bags, avoid the insanity of the crowded malls and in-store shopping by ordering online. You also may want to use a credit card that gives you rewards which will be nice for you at a later date!

Finally, remember you need to rest, keep stress as low as possible and stay healthy. No one likes to be sick – especially during the holidays. If your plate is too full it's OKAY to ask for help whether it be from a spouse, friend, kids, family, and even a guest. Or even better, hire a Holiday Elf to assist you in taking care of all that needs to be done!

TIME IS VALUABLE. Give yourself or another the PERFECT GIFT -- TIME !!

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Jackie Murphy is a seasoned business professional with 23+ years in the legal field. EK Errands Express is a personal assistant / errand running service established in 2004 based on her observations of changing times, lack of time for family & leisure, need for life balance and desire to make life simple. She has been featured on WISH-TV, in local publications and a Member of Various Preferred Vendor Lists. Visit www.EK-Errands-Express.com or contact Jackie at (317) 356-4936 (office); (317) 698-8896 (cell); e-mail: Jackie@EK-Errands-Express.com



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