

The Post Rock Connection
Post Rock Extension District #1 Family and Consumer Sciences Column
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By Brenda Langdon, Family Resource Management Agent

Stress Less Through the Holidays

Preparing for holiday gatherings, events and activities may fill you with anticipation and excitement along with some anxiety. As families prepare to spend quality time together, don't feel overwhelmed by all the different family dynamics. The holidays are a time for getting together with family, enjoying a fine meal and catching up on each other's lives.

Prioritize what brings you joy and emotional recharge, such as people or activities, and simplify when you can. If making your grandmother's cookie recipe from scratch every holiday, stresses you out, then remember it's okay to say no to situations that create more stress.

Get some fresh air and sunlight. Getting outside can help you relax and lift your mood. Many people struggle with feelings of depression during the winter months with fewer hours of sunlight and more time spent indoors. Walking outside and catching some sun can be calming.

If you are missing a loved one this holiday season, instead of trying to avoid thinking about the loss, honor and celebrate them by getting together with other family members and friends and exchange stories.

Holiday spending can leave people in debt creating stress that may last well into the new year. Try to avoid overspending and focus on celebrating together, be present and engaged and support each other.

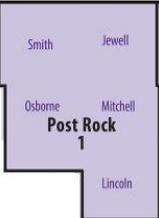
Making sure the house is clean, the food is ready, and the presents are wrapped can be overwhelming. Some important practical tips can help minimize the stress of the holidays.

- Plan ahead- create a menu to help you stay organized and make grocery shopping easier.

- Say no – it’s okay to say no to some holiday commitments. Try sharing your to-do list with other family members.
- Plan spending – make a budget and stick to it. Spending money on your loved ones is important, but so is paying the energy bill.
- Create a relaxing surrounding – turn on some Christmas music, light some candles. Research has found that listening to music and the scent of citrus can boost feelings of well-being.
- Maintain healthy habits – a short workout each morning, or try sledding to get in some extra exercise. Eat healthy snacks throughout the season.
- Be realistic – you are only one person, and you can only do so much. Forget about perfection and relax and enjoy the people around you.
- Take a break – don’t forget about your own needs. Take a nap, go for a short walk, read a book or watch a funny movie. Laughing relaxes the whole body, and can relieve stress.

The holidays are meant to be a fun, enjoyable time with family and friends. Use these tips to help ensure you enjoy the holidays and keep stress to a minimum.

The Post Rock District of K-State Research and Extension serves Jewell, Lincoln, Mitchell, Osborne, and Smith Counties. Contact Brenda at bklangdon@ksu.edu or by calling 785-346-2521. Stay connected with “Post Rock Extension” on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube. Our website is www.postrock.ksu.edu.



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