Holiday Weight Challenge

Stay calm during the holidays

"Stress is the trash of modern life — we all generate it but if you don’t dispose of it properly, it will pile up and overtake your life."
– Terri Guillemets

Holiday activities are fun, but for many people, the pressure of unrealistic expectations adds stress. Remember to give yourself the gift of “me time” and take a break from the hustle and bustle of the holidays. Unmanaged stress can affect choices, which may in turn sabotage your efforts to stay on track and be healthy.

Relieve stress

Let go and release stress through activities like exercise, meditation or yoga rather than watching TV, overeating or drinking alcohol.

Interact with positive people and if possible, avoid the negative ones who drain your energy. You may even consider counseling or a support group.

Enjoy a good laugh. Laughter increases blood flow, boosts immune response, lowers blood sugar levels and relieves physical tension and stress. Humor also allows you to see situations in a more realistic, less threatening light.

Slow down, relieve burnout and take time to breathe deeply from your abdomen. When you do it properly, deep breathing reduces the production of cortisol, a stress hormone.

This week’s challenge

Relaxation techniques are a great way to de-stress and enter a state of calm. Deep breathing is an easy technique that anyone can do, anytime, anywhere. Follow these instructions and try it!

• Sit comfortably, with your knees bent and your shoulders, head and neck relaxed. Close your eyes.

• Place one hand on your upper chest and the other on your stomach just below your rib cage (this allows you to feel your diaphragm move as you breathe).

• Breathe in slowly as if sucking air through a straw. When you inhale, the hand on your upper chest should remain still while the hand on your stomach rises. Picture your air filling a balloon underneath the hand on your stomach.

• Hold your breath for five seconds and notice the difference in how it feels.

• Exhale slowly through your mouth, letting the “balloon” deflate as you exhale.

• How do you feel now? Practice using deep breathing or another relaxation technique this week when you feel overwhelmed.