

Health Coaching Hints

"Holidays & Happiness"



December 2020

Health Coaching Hint #1: Local for Unique Gifts That Will Make a Difference

This year has been rough for all of us, especially for small businesses. With shops closed and a lockdown in place, the easy option for holiday shopping might be to go online. However, if our communities are to survive, you might reconsider shopping small. The more we can do to support our local small businesses the more normal all our lives will be once the lockdown is lifted.

For many small businesses, this time of year is their busiest time of year. If you are wondering what you can do, we suggest first checking to see if they offer:

- * In-person shopping by appointment
- * Online or by phone orders
- * Curbside pickup or local delivery

Next, keep these tips in mind to keep your holiday shopping as stress-free as possible:

1. Shop early and be patient with delays. Postal carriers are already struggling to keep up and the increase this time of year is likely to make the normal holiday shipping timelines a bit longer than we are used to.

2. Don't forget to treat yourself. It's been a tough year and you deserve it!
3. Send some joy to small business owners. Send a note of thanks or give a review to share with them how much they mean to you.

While we may not be able to literally come together this holiday season, we can still support each other and keep our community strong.

Health Coaching Hint #2: Make an Effort to Stay Connected

This year it's even more important to keep our relationships with our friends and family thriving. Strong social connections can be a big boost to your overall sense of well-being and happiness, but did you know that these relationships can also have impacts on your overall health?

Studies have shown that:

- * Loneliness or poor social relations can have a mortality risk factor similar to smoking tobacco (1)
- * Strong social relationships can positively influence your cholesterol levels (2)

Even though one more Zoom call might sound like too much right now, taking the time to keep your relationships strong this holiday season will be an added boost to your health and the health of your friends and family.

Health Coaching Hint #3: Start New Holiday Traditions

While the holidays might still be happening this year, the way we celebrate them is going to be different than usual. One way to embrace this with positivity is to think of creative ways you can make new holiday traditions the whole family can enjoy. Here are a few ideas to get you started:

1. HOST A HOLIDAY READING

A great way to connect with family and friends across the country or in local quarantine is to schedule a time for a holiday reading using a video conferencing platform like Zoom. Spice it up with a fun, festive background, holiday music, and reminding everyone to have their favorite holiday snacks and beverages available during the call.

2. DONATE TO THOSE IN NEED

Giving back to those in need is a holiday tradition for many, but can be a new tradition if you haven't had time to do this in the past. Some ideas to get you started include donating gently used clothes to a local shelter, find out if your local library is doing a toy drive, contact the nearest food bank to see what non-perishable foods they need, or you can donate money to a cause that is close to your heart.

3. THROW A VIRTUAL HOLIDAY SCAVENGER HUNT

A great way to increase the joy and laughter with your friends and family is to turn your virtual call into a holiday scavenger hunt. Start by making a list of holiday items or find a holiday-themed scavenger list online.

Next, schedule a day and time for everyone to come together on Zoom or your platform of choice and then ask the attendees to find the items on the list. Whoever finds and shows off the most items on the list wins!

What new traditions will you start this year?

Health Coaching Hint #4: Make time for post-holiday self-care

Surviving the holidays can be exhausting. Between the gatherings (virtually this year), food preparation, managing emotions and relatives (both good and bad), plus time spent putting up and then taking down decorations who wouldn't be tired.

We can't think of a better time than now to encourage taking a moment to schedule some much-needed self-care!

It's been a long year and these tips can help you move into the new year feeling a little less stressed and ready for whatever 2021 brings.

1. Make exercise a priority. Restart that routine you had a few months ago or start a new one. Start small, but make it consistent and something you'll enjoy doing. Exercise is a great stress reliever and can help build your resilience towards challenging times.

2. Be grateful. You've survived 2020 and while the year may not have been what you planned, you have much to be grateful for. Regularly making time to reflect on what you're thankful for can build stronger positive emotional neural pathways. Think of it as exercise for your brain.

3. Make time for sleep. A regular sleep schedule and consistently getting 7-9 hours each night can be a boost to your overall emotional and physical health. The holidays can throw us off track, so make time to get your sleep routine back to where it should be.

4. Spend some time with your emotions. Rather than eating (or drinking) your emotions, take time to sit with them. The holidays can be a very emotional time for many people, so make time to journal or talk with a friend.