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Practical Ways to Keep Your ADD Under Control During the Holiday Season

By Jennifer Koretsky

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Do November's Thanksgiving experiences have you dreading the December holidays? The idea of gifts, family, and days off sounds great...but we all know that holidays are some of the most stressful times of the year. When an ADDer starts to become immersed in the shopping, cooking, traveling, and family interactions, their ADD can complicate matters. You can find yourself quickly feeling overwhelmed and overloaded. You may not be able to avoid these feelings altogether, but there are some strategies you can employ to help keep your ADD under control during the holiday season.

The first thing that you can do for yourself is to schedule some "you" time. Find something that will recharge your battery – take a walk, go for a drive, sit quietly in a favorite chair, meditate, exercise, lay down and close your eyes, etc. Find something that works for you, and commit to doing it every day. Don't wait until you feel your ADD getting out of control. The holiday season can become more and more intense from day to day. Daily recharging is a method for preventing the intense feelings of being overwhelmed.

Another thing that you can do to keep your ADD under control is to take frequent breaks during chaotic times. First, identify your stressors. Personally, I find myself overwhelmed and agitated while shopping during the holiday season. The streets, the malls, and all the stores are so crowded that it's hard to get where you want to go, find the things you need, and navigate your way without bumping into people! Some people don't mind this experience, but it instantly overwhelms me. So I make sure that my shopping trips are short, and I allow myself to take time out to go outside or sit with a cup of coffee when I feel myself getting agitated. I don't pressure myself to do it all in a set amount of time.

And finally, another good strategy is to prioritize your tasks. Do you already feel like your list is building with holiday cards to send, decorations to put up, gifts to buy, etc.? Plan in the time you need, and spread out the tasks so that you don't end up scrambling at the last minute. Make a list of all the things you need to do, and then prioritize it. After your list is prioritized, commit some time to those things. As an added incentive, make appointments to do these things with other people. Ask your spouse to

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commit to a day to put up the decorations, invite a friend to have coffee and write out cards together, see if your mom wants to go shopping with you...you get the picture! Making the tasks fun and social may help keep you on track.

Remember, the holidays are stressful for everyone, especially ADDers, but you can keep your ADD in check. Schedule in daily recharging time. Take breaks when you need them. And plan ahead to avoid procrastinating. Using these strategies to the best of your ability will help you keep your ADD under control this holiday season!

Jennifer Koretsky is a Professional ADD Management Coach who helps adults manage their ADD and

move forward in life. She encourages clients to increase self-awareness, focus on strengths and talents, and create realistic action plans. She offers a 90-day intensive skill-building program, workshops, and private coaching. Her work has been featured in numerous media, including The New York Times Magazine and The Times (UK). To subscribe to Jennifer's free email newsletter, The ADD Management Guide, please visit

Plan To Manage Holiday Stress

By ADD Coach Jennifer Koretsky

Everyone finds themselves stressed out during the holiday season. But for adults with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), November through January can feel like a whirlwind of tasks and responsibilities. Lack of time management will result in undue pressure and overwhelm for the ADD adult.

One way to take the stress out of the holidays is to plan for them. These simple steps can help the ADD adult manage their time and tasks during the holiday season, thereby relieving unnecessary stress.

Create one hour this week to plan your holiday preparation schedule, and follow these steps:

Step 1 – Make a List of all the Things You Need to Do to Prepare for the Holiday

This probably includes gift shopping, writing and mailing holiday cards, decorating your home, planning your travel, etc. After you have made this list, put a star next to each of the items that you don't like to do. (Maybe you get bored writing out the holiday cards, or maybe you detest shopping.)

Step 2 – Use a Calendar or Planner

Use something that gives you ample space to write for each day. This could be a wall calendar, a daily planner, or planning software. Begin by writing in all your holiday appointments, such as parties and scheduled shopping trips. Next, write in all the other activities that you have going on during the month, like meetings and appointments. When you're done, you should have a good idea of where your free time is.

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Now, take a look at the items on your holiday to-do list that are not marked with a star, and schedule them in. Do you have a free evening next week in which you can write out your cards? Schedule it on your calendar! Do you have a free Saturday to get your shopping done? Schedule it on your calendar!

Step 3 – Make the Dreaded Tasks Easier

Take a look at all those tasks you marked with a star. These are the tasks that you hate to do for one reason or another. Take a moment to look at each one, and figure out how to make that task a little easier or more bearable. If you hate writing cards because it's a tedious and boring task, you can make it easier on yourself by inviting a friend over to chat, catch up, and write out cards with you. Hate decorating? Perhaps you can buy a new CD you've been wanting and allow yourself to crank it up while you put up the holiday decorations.

Investing just a small amount of time in planning can save you from undue stress and overwhelm during this holiday season.

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Jennifer Koretsky is an ADD Management Coach who helps adults learn how to manage their ADD and move forward in life. She offers individual and group coaching, workshops, and skill-building programs. Her work has been featured in various media, including The New York Times Magazine. Subscribe to Jennifer's free email newsletter, The ADD Management Guide, by visiting

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