



Healthy Holidays

Banishing Holiday Stress and Burnout

By *Shawna Rocha-Hale & Hush Skincare*

The holidays can be a stressful and overwhelming time of the year. They create a lot more physical work, increase demand on our time and can be chaotic. But, with a little planning, boundary setting and prioritizing of our bodies and minds, we can once again find the joy of the holiday season.

Getting Organized

The holidays are right around the corner, so start planning now. A focused plan and strategy to successfully navigate through the holiday season will make your life more organized and less stressful. At this time of year, we all need to be micro-managers, even regarding our own personal lives and work schedules. It is important to recognize and set reasonable expectations so we can feel successful this holiday season.

The best way to alleviate holiday stress while increasing profits is with thorough preparation. In order to maximize earnings and have business operations run smoothly during the holidays, skin care professionals must be ready for the occasion. Ask yourself if your spa or treatment room offer treatment specials, retail discounts, packages, special gifts, or if you host holiday parties or events. Get that planning all squared away before the holidays arrive, months before if possible. Order your products and decorating needs, and create special menus as early as possible leading up to the big events. Get some of these “big ticket items” that take lots of time and effort off your plate early, so you can focus on the holidays themselves when they arrive.

Get a calendar and some notepads. First let's schedule the big events or days of importance that are taking place in the spa. When are the specials, gift card sales, product sales etc.? Get those on the calendar. Second, grab a calendar and mark off the days and times that will not be spent working, but rather doing the important things you enjoy this holiday season. Write down all the big family events that you have coming up, the days up to and after the holiday that you would like off, the days you're decorating your house, the days you're wrapping the gifts and the days you need to shop, bake or do holiday prep. Get those on that calendar right away.

Never underestimate the power of lists. They are very important in keeping you organized, especially during this hectic time. By creating relevant lists, you can prioritize what needs to be done urgently, offering much more clarity when tackling tasks. Should shopping be done by a certain date? Interested in seeing the Nutcracker Ballet or baking cookies? Does a weekend heading to the snow, volunteering or going to the movies sound ideal? Think of the things that will

truly inspire the holiday spirit and what's important for you. Then, add those items to the lists and mark them off the calendar.

Scheduling and Overbooking

Now that you have your calendar figured out with the most important days and events appropriately scheduled, focus on sticking to the plan. Schedule the rest of your workdays with the open days of the calendar, remembering to not work too many days per week or too many hours in the day. Exhaustion is a huge factor that can lead to feeling overwhelmed during the holidays. Set your work hours and stick to them; it is up to you to police your days and times. Take control of your schedule, don't let the schedule control you. This will prevent overbooking and overextending yourself.

“TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR SCHEDULE, DON'T LET THE SCHEDULE CONTROL YOU.”

Remember that no means no, especially when changing times or days to accommodate clients. Follow your schedule! If necessary, practice saying “no.” It's a one-word, complete sentence, yet, so many of us struggle to communicate this basic boundary. Sometimes we overcomplicate it and other times we avoid it altogether. Fortunately, like so many other emotional wellness skills, practice can make all the difference.

Clarify your boundaries whether that is time, money or energy. These resources aren't limitless, so it's up to you to use them wisely. Taking time to get clear on your boundaries, and practicing asserting them to others, is one of the best ways to set yourself up for a less stressful, more supported season. Sure, it might be impossible to plan for every holiday stressor, but chances are there are certain sources of stress you already know about. These organized steps help to address these stressors or hopefully prevent them entirely.

Don't forget to also schedule your own professional

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services. During the holidays, many professionals neglect their own eyebrows, nails, hair and skin because they are so busy fitting in everyone else. By the time they make their own appointments, everyone is booked. Book personal holiday appointments now, while the calendar is out and appointments are available.

Focusing on Self-Care

Burnout is very real for business owners and entrepreneurs, and it can be amplified during the holidays. Demand for your time will only increase during the holiday season. Implementing a plan can make this season run more smoothly and be a successful one. Neglecting yourself can lead to feelings of overwhelming stress and exhaustion. Exercises like meditation and a cardio workout, or simply taking a break, can be more productive for you and your business.

It is imperative to know when you need to recharge and how you need to do that. You may be someone who needs to escape for 30 minutes after dinner to get away from everyone. A walk in the fresh air after dinner is always a great way to do that. Maybe you need to sleep for 12 hours after hosting. Whatever your “me time” entails, just schedule it. You cannot pour from an empty cup, so know your limits and recharge when necessary.

The practice of self-care is necessary no matter what season, but it is especially necessary during the chaos of the holidays. It is possible to take care

Use candles and aromatherapy to add ambiance to your bath.

of yourself while juggling the obligations all around you. Winter is a great time to unwind in warm bubble baths, light some candles, bask in a hydrating face mask, watch a holiday movie, take a walk or just spend time alone in a quiet place. Spend half an hour a day on yourself if that's what you need to recharge.

Just slowing down for a moment is important. Taking several deep, gentle breaths and doing some mindful breathing with a slow, full inhale and a relaxed release while letting go of thoughts can clear the mind and calm the body (See **4-7-8 Breathing Technique**). Also, you can take a meditation break. Practicing meditation regularly can help decrease stress and improve your mood—two things that are especially important during the holidays. The best part about meditation is that you can do it anywhere at any time.

Remembering Physical Health Basics

Nutrition and physical activity are important to keeping stress levels at a minimum during the season. While indulging yourself with the delicious food and beverages unique to this time of year, do not neglect your nutrition. Make sure there is a balance of healthy foods with those indulgent treats that you just can't pass up during the festivities. Be intentional about working fruits and greens into your day.

Make sure that you plan ahead when you have busy workdays by setting aside time to either pack a lunch, have lunch delivered or make time to go out for a lunch break. Skipping meals can also lead to poor mental health and sluggish physical health, and it can make us not work at our full potential. Don't forget to also keep healthy snacks on hand, so you aren't starving or skipping meals. Food is our fuel, let's not forget to use it wisely.

It's hard enough to exercise the rest of the year, but adding holidays to the mix is difficult. Many of us find exercise becomes less of a priority as to-do lists grow longer and longer. Try to stick to your exercise routine as much as possible. Do what you can and don't forget to schedule it in the day. Staying active in any way will give you energy. Physical activity can also reduce stress and tension and help mitigate some of the extra calories you may be eating. Take a walk during your lunch break,

4-7-8 Breathing Technique ¹

This breathing technique helps to reduce anxiety, aid in sleep, manage cravings and control or reduce anger responses.

- Step 1. Empty the air out of your lungs.
- Step 2. Breathe in through the nose for four seconds.
- Step 3. Hold your breath for seven seconds.
- Step 4. Forcefully exhale the breath through your mouth, pursing your lips and making a “whoosh” sound, for eight seconds.
- Step 5. Repeat the cycle up to four times.

park in the furthest parking spot while shopping, have a dance party with the kids, do some cleaning, do a couple laps around the mall—anything that moves the body will do the trick.

Enjoying and Celebrating Holiday Success

Keep your mind and your thoughts positive. Even though the holidays are definitely the most stressful time of the year, they can also be the most joyous. Remember your reason for the season. Taking time to embrace the spirit of the holidays can help to keep you grounded and centered when things become stressful. The spirit of giving, joy, peace and goodwill permeates the air. With a solid plan, an organized calendar, creating boundaries, monitoring your mental and physical health, and taking care of your own needs, the holidays can be one of the most successful and wonderful times of the year. ✨

REFERENCES

1. <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/324417#how-to-do-it>
(All websites accessed Aug. 16, 2022)



Shawna Rocha is the owner of Awaken Day Spa in California and Washington. She developed a love for helping clients with compromised and sensitive skin and strives to gain additional knowledge, and education.

Since becoming an esthetician, Rocha has completed multiple advanced courses in Oncology Esthetics, Immuno-Esthetics and has specialized training in sensitive skin and holistic therapies. She holds several certifications, including one in NCEA and has become the director of education for Hale and Hush Skincare. Rocha's current passion is writing blogs and articles regarding the skin care industry.

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