Self-care during the holidays

The holiday season can be a joyous time of year, but it can also be extremely stressful. Travel plans, hectic schedules, changes in diet and increased alcohol consumption may cause emotional and physical strain. Add dealing with difficult relatives to the mix, and you may feel like fast forwarding to January 1. Fortunately, you can find ways to alleviate stress and enjoy the pleases of the season.
Expressing gratitude can increase happiness

Just ask J. Bryan Sexton, an associate professor in psychiatry and behavioral sciences at Duke’s School of Medicine and an expert on emotional resilience. Sexton and his team have extensively studied the connection between being grateful and experiencing an increased level of well-being. They developed a gratitude app to help you assess your work-life balance and provide an easy way to express gratitude on a regular basis. Visit bit.ly/grattool to try the app. Or, choose your own bite-size “resilience adventure” related to awe, kindness, relationships or positive anticipation of future events. There are four online adventures to choose from, or try them all at bit.ly/resilbite.

Great American Smokeout helps smokers quit

The Great American Smokeout (GASO) occurs each year on the third Thursday of November. During the week of November 13, LIVE FOR LIFE team members roved Duke Regional Hospital, Duke Raleigh Hospital, PRMO and Duke University School of Nursing to provide GASO information. They also staffed tables at common smoking locations on East Campus and at Duke University Hospital to promote tobacco cessation. Carbon monoxide testing and notes of inspiration to encourage those trying to quit were offered. Are you ready to quit? Visit https://hr.duke.edu/wellness/tobacco-cessation-resources today to learn more.

Get Moving Challenge returns!

The Get Moving Challenge returns January 8. Form a group of five to 11 colleagues for this annual team competition and compete to take the most steps, exercise the most minutes and/or lose the most weight. You’ll receive weekly emails containing workout routines, inspirational tips and healthy recipes. Registration opens mid-December. Visit https://hr.duke.edu/wellness/get-moving to get more info and sign up.

Updates from Duke Fitness Club

Duke employees and their families can take advantage of discounted gym memberships and much more though Duke Fitness Club. You choose the Club with the hours, classes and equipment that suit you best. Take advantage of payroll deduction of fees and short contracts, which are three months initially and then month-to-month afterward. Life Time Fitness offers an additional discount to Duke members if they transfer their memberships to a LIVE FOR LIFE contract.

Here’s the latest on just a few of the Clubs:

The YMCA opened its new Northwest Cary location on October 4, 2017. “The Factory” in Wake Forest, previously owned by the YMCA, became part of O2 Fitness in August. O2 has transformed this 20,000-square-foot space into an airy and welcoming exercise facility. New locations of O2 Fitness are expected to open soon in Holly Springs and in North Ridge shopping center in Raleigh. Total Fitness in Roxboro is moving into a brand-new building by December of 2017. The new address will be 105 James St.

LIVE FOR LIFE distributed over 1,000 passes to employees to try a Duke Fitness Club facility of their choice (up to three) from August 28 to October 6 for up to seven visits. Look out for another opportunity early in 2018! To learn more or enroll, visit https://hr.duke.edu/wellness/fitness.
Maintain Don’t Gain this holiday season

Most Americans gain weight between Thanksgiving and New Year’s. Looking for a way to keep your holiday weight gain down and your energy up? Register for Maintain Don’t Gain, which runs from Monday, November 13 through Sunday, January 7. This eight-week, self-directed program will help you maintain your weight—or even shed pounds—during the holidays, when it’s more challenging to eat healthy foods and fit in exercise.

Each week Maintain Don’t Gain participants receive a short, encouraging email with a health feature and an attached newsletter with additional insights and a healthy, easy recipe. If you’d like to participate, you’ll report 5 out of 8 weeks of weigh-ins to receive 10 LIVE FOR LIFE (LFL) dollars per week (up to 80, as long as you don’t gain more than 3 pounds from the first week’s weigh-in until the end of the program). To earn additional LFL dollars, you can also report your exercise activity. Report 5 or more weeks during which you exercised at least 3 days to get a bonus of 5 LFL dollars per week, up to 25.

Participants have until December 1 to get their body composition measured the first time to earn up to 20 additional LFL dollars as part of this program. There will be designated “drop by” times at the LFL office, Duke South Cafeteria and Duke North Cafeteria, so that you can have your measurements taken if desired (not a requirement). Exchange your LFL dollars for prizes like gloves, tee shirts, travel mugs and cell phone arm bands. To get more info or register, visit www.hr.duke.edu/maintain.

Duke Basic and Duke Select: Know your drug benefit

It can be difficult to remember the ins and outs of your prescription benefit. As you begin to plan for next year, keep these key points in mind to save money:

- Duke Basic has a $100 deductible, which you must meet before drug coverage for prescriptions. Once you meet your deductible, the regular copays will apply for your medication.

- Duke Basic and Duke Select have a Retail Refill Allowance. This means that beginning with the fourth fill of a maintenance medication (a medication you take every day), you will need to fill a 90-day supply at either Duke Pharmacy or Express Scripts Mail Order. If you continue to get these medications at a retail pharmacy, you will pay your copay plus a penalty of up to 50 percent of the drug cost for Duke Select Members and up to 100 percent of the drug cost for Duke Basic.

- The easiest way to get set up at one of the preferred pharmacies is to ask your provider to send your chronic medication prescriptions electronically (whenever possible) to Express Scripts Mail Order or one of the Duke pharmacies.

- “Brand at retail deductible” applies when you choose to get a brand medication at a retail pharmacy for up to a 34-day supply. Once you meet the $100 brand at retail deductible, you will not incur this deductible again during that calendar year. Ask your provider to write for generic medications (whenever possible) to help avoid this penalty.
Healthy Duke initiative recap

With over 50 well-attended events during a “Week of Wellness” (September 11–15), Healthy Duke inspired many to embark on their own journey to optimize their health. The week showcased the huge variety of resources, benefits and services available to members of the Duke community to address various aspects of health. Each day focused on one of the five core themes of Healthy Duke:

- **Monday:** Mental & Emotional Well-Being
- **Tuesday:** Environment & Culture
- **Wednesday:** Physical Activity & Movement
- **Thursday:** Fulfillment & Purpose
- **Friday:** Food & Nutrition

Events included yoga classes and chair massage, visits with therapy dogs, the opportunity to walk to the top of Duke Chapel, access to the exhibits at the Nasher Museum of Art, a Lunch & Learn series on nutrition, open houses at LIVE FOR LIFE and much more. For more about the initiative, visit [https://sites.duke.edu/healthy/](https://sites.duke.edu/healthy/).

Goal-setting tips for the new year

The Healthy Duke initiative is all about improving our health, well-being and quality of life. Setting one or more “S.M.A.R.T.” goals can help you establish the healthy habits that are more likely than willpower to lead to sustained success:

**Specific.** A goal needs to be as specific as possible so you can work toward it and achieve it. What exactly do you want to achieve and how? Why do you want to do it?

**Measurable.** It is important to track your progress to know if you are hitting your target or not, so make your goals measurable. This may also help you feel motivated to keep going and take the next step.

**Achievable.** Your goal should be both achievable and inspiring so that it motivates you to succeed. If you’ve never run before, setting a goal to run a marathon in a month is not achievable. Overhauling your entire eating plan all at one time probably isn’t, either. Identify what supports you need to position yourself for success.

**Realistic.** Be honest with yourself. Ask yourself, “Do I have the ability and commitment to achieve this goal?”

**Time-based.** To help you stay on track, set a target date for the completion of your goal.

A gentle reminder: Be prepared for setbacks. Nobody is perfect, and we shouldn’t expect our journey toward health and wellness to be either. Every day is a new opportunity to make healthy choices!

**Examples:**

- “I will eat one more serving of fruit per day at least twice this week by packing an orange for an afternoon snack.”
- “When I go grocery shopping this week, I will buy baby carrots and portion them into individual servings, so I can easily grab one from the fridge.”
- “I will walk around my neighborhood after work at least twice this week.”
- “I will take a 30-minute break from work or studying to eat lunch at least three times this week.”
- “Either before the day begins or before I go to bed, I will write in my journal at least twice this week.”
- “I will adjust my schedule so that I get at least seven hours of sleep three times this week.”

How do you rejuvenate?

A critical component of your mental and emotional well-being is making time for enjoyable activities. As part of the Healthy Duke initiative, LIVE FOR LIFE asked members of the Duke community to share how they recharge their batteries. See a word cloud of the results at [https://dukehealthcloud.herokuapp.com/](https://dukehealthcloud.herokuapp.com/).
EAT RIGHT – To feel your best, focus on maintaining a balanced diet that includes lots of veggies. Don’t skip meals, and be sure to eat a healthy snack before you go to a party with lots of treats. If you’re already partially full, you’ll be less likely to double down on the chocolate cake. Drink a glass of water before every meal or snack. Always finish one mouthful of food before starting another. Eat slowly, chew your food thoroughly and savor every bite!

DRINK RESPONSIBLY – Like foods filled with sugar and unhealthy fats, alcohol is abundant during the holidays. Overconsumption may even be encouraged, as everyone “makes merry.” At parties, focus on socializing, not drinking. Don’t feel shy about asking for a nonalcoholic drink or simply keep a glass of water in your hand at get-togethers. If you plan on partaking, decide ahead of time how many drinks you feel comfortable with and stick to it. Always know who your designated driver is before you have your first drink. Abstaining or only drinking in moderation helps keep holiday pressures under control.

MAKE TIME FOR YOU – Part of what makes the holidays fun are all the parties, dinners and events. How do you decide which invitations to accept and what activities to choose? Make a weekly holiday schedule and decide which functions you’d like to attend while factoring in your work and family responsibilities—as well as enough sleep, exercise and down time. Choose to attend the events you’ll enjoy for the conversation or the activities, and avoid those that focus mainly on food or alcohol. If you want to catch up with someone, but can’t fit it in, make plans to get together after the holidays.

TRAVEL WITHOUT STRESS – Traveling can wreak havoc on your body’s usual rhythms. To stay on track, get plenty of rest before, during and after a trip. Stay hydrated and eat simple, healthy foods that you’re used to. Changes in diet can be especially hard on you while traveling. Minimize stress before you depart by making a checklist of things to pack that includes a game or book for each family member. Keep in mind that traveling during the holidays can take longer, and plan accordingly. Allow yourself more time than you think you’ll need and give tardy-prone family members a departure time that’s earlier than when you actually must leave.

ENJOY FAMILY TIME – Are you already dreading spending time with your critical aunt or self-centered brother? Interactions with extended family can be the most challenging aspect of the holidays. It’s crucial to get some time away to recharge your batteries. Take a ten-minute walk after a meal. Go into an empty room and do a few minutes of yoga or listen to a short, guided relaxation (it’s easy to find one on YouTube). Make a plan ahead of time regarding your boundaries, how you want to conduct yourself and how you’ll respond if a relative says or does something that bothers you. Avoid contentious topics, and practice ways of changing the subject if someone tries to engage you in a polarizing discussion. Try to keep the things about your family that make you feel grateful foremost in mind.
Opioid addiction: Identifying the problem and getting help

Over 33,000 people died from opioid overdose in 2015, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Two million more suffered from opioid misuse disorder. This national epidemic affects all ethnic and socio-economic groups and shows no sign of slowing down.

Opioids include the painkillers morphine, methadone, hydrocodone, oxycodone and the illegal drug heroin, among other drugs and medications. Opioid addiction is a medical condition that often begins with a valid prescription. Anyone who takes prescription opioids can become addicted or develop a tolerance and need to take higher doses over time to relieve pain. There is also the possibility of developing physical dependence, which causes withdrawal symptoms when the medication is stopped.

The best way to avoid problems is to tell your doctor your medical history and that of your family, including any drug or alcohol problems. You and your doctor should create a pain management plan that includes non-opioid options. Discuss any concerns and ask about the side effects of all of your meds. Be sure to follow up with your doctor regularly and take opioids exactly as prescribed.

Possible physical, psychological and behavioral signs of opioid addiction:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bloodshot eyes or abnormally large/small pupils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impaired coordination or slurred speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreased or increased appetite</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Psychological</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety or paranoia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irritability or mood swings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appearing “out of it”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noticeably increased or decreased energy level</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavioral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sleeping too much or too little</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of interest in hobbies or socializing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neglecting work, school or other responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial problems/unexplained spending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretive behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudden change in friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal problems/arrests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neglect of personal hygiene</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you suspect that someone you love has a substance abuse problem, discuss it as soon as possible. Early treatment will likely bring better results. Try to remain non-judgmental and supportive. Remember—no one wants an addiction problem.

Personal Assistance Service (PAS) offers free and confidential consultations, short-term counseling and referrals to Duke faculty and staff and their immediate family members. Call 919-416-1727 or visit http://pas.duke.edu/. Duke Raleigh employees should call 1-800-327-2251.

In addition, SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) offers a national, round-the-clock helpline: 1-800-662-HELP (4357). SAMHSA gives free, confidential referrals in English and Spanish to local treatment facilities, organizations and support groups. You can also visit SAMHSA’s online Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator at https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov. Other valuable online resources include: National Institute on Drug Abuse (www.drugabuse.gov); American Society of Addiction Medicine (www.asam.org); and American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (www.aacap.org).

There is hope for recovery! Medications, social support and psychological/behavioral therapies are effective tools in the journey out of addiction. Outpatient and residential treatment facilities, as well as social support groups, are also options. Organizations such as Nar-Anon Family Groups offer comfort to the friends and family members of addicts.

How to dispose of your unused opioids safely

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recommends that patients and caregivers remove expired, unwanted or unused medications from their home as soon as possible to help reduce the chance that others may accidentally take or intentionally misuse the remaining medicine.

1. Look for a local dropbox or medication “take back” event to dispose of your medication. You can find one in your area at https://apps.ncdoi.net/f?p=102:24:::NO:::

2. Certain medications (including some commonly used opioids) can be flushed down the toilet per the FDA. You can find a full list at: www.fda.gov/Drugs/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/BuyingUsingMedicineSafely/EnsuringSafeUseofMedicine/SafeDisposalofMedicines/ucm576167.htm

3. If the medication is not on the list above:
   - Remove all medicines from their pill bottles or containers.
   - Remove all of your info from the empty pill bottles and throw away in your trash can.
   - Put all medicines in a used milk jug, laundry detergent bottle, or other bottle with lid.
   - Add used coffee grounds, dirt or kitty litter to the bottle and mix with the medicines.
   - Tightly seal the bottle and throw away in your trash can.

If you ever have questions regarding proper disposal, please call your local pharmacist or call Express Scripts and ask to speak with a pharmacist.
How to eat a low-sugar diet—even during the holidays

The American Heart Association recommends no more than 9 teaspoons of added sugar per day for men and 6 teaspoons for women. Numerous studies indicate that Americans far surpass this with added sugars in common products like soft drinks and fruit drinks (fruitades and fruit punch); treats like candy, cakes, cookies and pies; dairy desserts and milk products (ice cream, sweetened yogurt and sweetened milk); and sweetened grains (cinnamon toast and honey-nut waffles).

This overconsumption of sugar is linked to many serious health conditions, including obesity, diabetes, heart disease, gum disease and cancer. The holidays present additional challenges. With some forethought, you can lower the amount of sugar in your diet—even when surrounded by holiday treats. You might enjoy the season even more if you’re eating healthy meals.

A primary strategy is to enjoy delicious, low-sugar versions of traditional holiday foods. Sweet potatoes are a perennial favorite, and their natural sweetness makes adding sugar unnecessary. When whipping up your favorite sweet potato casserole recipe, skip the maple syrup. Sprinkle pecans and unsweetened shredded coconut on top instead of marshmallows.

In addition to sweet potatoes, acorn squash and other varieties of winter squash are in season in North Carolina during fall and winter. You may find that you love the subtle, sweet flavor of acorn squash. Like the sweet potato, squash can be prepared in a multitude of ways: in soups, roasted, as casseroles and more. Both squash and sweet potatoes are high in vitamins and fiber, which slows digestion and helps glucose levels remain stable.

Whatever holiday foods you plan to make, do a quick internet search for low-sugar versions of the recipe. Applesauce can often be used to replace at least some of the refined sugar (and vegetable oil or butter) in baked goods. Depending on the recipe, naturally sweet mashed banana and canned pumpkin can also serve as substitutes for added sugar and fat.

You can increase the amount of spices like cinnamon and nutmeg in your favorite desserts to add flavor without increasing sugar content. Be careful not to overdo it by tasting the mix as you add small amounts. Try adding fresh lemon zest or herbs like rosemary and sage to a main dish to pump up flavor without adding sugar, fat or salt.

If you’re like many folks, cravings for pumpkin spice lattes begin to hit when the leaves start to fall. Holiday coffee drinks can have enormous amounts of sugar—as many as 50 grams (12 teaspoons) in a single serving. Instead of standing in line at the coffee shop, buy a container of pumpkin pie spice at the grocery store and sprinkle some into your favorite brew. Then you can control how much sugar you add.

Whatever strategies you use for reducing your sugar intake, go easy on yourself. Remember that improving eating habits takes time, effort and planning. Once your gut, palate and mindset have adjusted to a healthier diet, high-sugar foods may not appeal to you as much as they once did.
Mobile Market offers fresh, local food year-round

Too many frozen dinners or stops at the drive-thru window lately? Do you want to eat more veggies and healthier meals but don’t know where to start? Try ordering local produce, fish and specialty products that are grown, caught and prepared by local farmers. It’s easy with the Duke Mobile Market. When you eat food produced close to home, it benefits the environment and our local economy, as well as farmers that are our neighbors. And, you’ll enjoy fresher, tastier food that is often more nutritious—all at prices as low as $20 per week.

In addition to organic produce, the Mobile Market gives you access to a wide variety of other local items like eggs, nuts, raw honey, jam, bread, meat, tea and coffee. For seafood lovers, fresh catch from the North Carolina coast is also available. Wondering what veggies are on tap in North Carolina this time of year? Fall and winter crops include eggplant, okra, lettuces, cabbage, broccoli, African greens, spinach, arugula, Swiss chard, beets, turnips, winter squash, parsnips, carrots and sweet potatoes. Your box comes with tips on how to prepare your in-season veggies, which have often been picked that same day.

Here’s how it works. The Mobile Market is a Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) program. You subscribe to having a weekly share of goods delivered to you throughout the season. Local vendors hand-select and individually box your items. Your order is then delivered each week to your home or workplace. Or, you can pick up your share at Duke Gardens.

You may already be familiar with some of the local vendors participating in the Duke Mobile Market CSA Program for this growing season: Bella Bean Organics, Coon Rock Farm, Duke Campus Farm and Walking Fish Co-op. You can review a PDF with a complete list of each of their fees, offerings and delivery options at https://hr.duke.edu/wellness/mobile-farmers-market.

You’ll then visit the website of the vendor of your choice to register for your share. Send your payment with your registration form directly to the farmer or vendor. If you have any questions, you can call or email them directly.

If you need more information on the Mobile Market, contact Cassandra Callas at Cassandra.Callas@duke.edu or 919-681-0547. She can also help if you’d like to establish customized CSA delivery at your worksite. Participating in the Mobile Market is a fun and easy way to start improving your eating habits. Call or go online today!