

Holidays don't have to be full of stress

By Mandy Kendall

Christmas is coming up fast and so are the situations that can stress us. Here are some *Qwik-e* tips to help reduce the stress and increase the fun.

Get the best price – Whether you buy discount gift cards to give them directly to someone or to buy a gift with you can save up to 30 percent buying discounted gift cards. You can also sell gift cards that you know you will never use. Just Google “discounted gift cards” for a range of different sites. You can also Google “discount codes” to find sites that offer promotional codes to be used on websites for rebates or free shipping, etc. There are also sites that track prices for you to make sure you get the price you want for a particular item.



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Check your loyalty points – Apparently the U.S. is sitting on \$5 billion worth of unused loyalty points. If you shop at a store frequently, you may find you have a nice balance you could use toward Christmas.

Agree on a budget for everyone – It is easy to get carried away with expensive gifts. Perhaps suggest to the adults in your family that there is a maximum amount to be spent per gift. It's surprising how creative you can get when you are on

a budget.

Free fun – One of my most favorite childhood Christmas memories is caroling around our neighborhood. You can deliver cards and gifts (saving on postage) and spread some holiday cheer at the same time.

Family fun – Playing games is much more conducive to family bonding than lying around watching TV all day, and better for you, too.

Christmas budgets – If the kids in your life have wish lists that make your bank balance groan (and you too), you can either join forces with other relatives or have a heart-to-heart talk with the kids about what they can realistically expect. According to a survey by Red Tractor food standards watchdog, more than one in four kids worries about how their family will afford Christmas, so it might not be a difficult conversation.

Spread the love locally – Buy certificates to encourage family and loved ones to support businesses in town.

Don't buy it, make it – Nothing says “I care about you” more than something you have made yourself.

Have fun with e-cards – There are huge variety of animated e-cards you can send to family and friends at the fraction of the cost of physical cards (in fact many e-cards are free). This frees up time and money, which can be donated to your favorite charity.

Trouble thinking of a gift for someone – How about donating to their favorite charity on their behalf?

Eat before you go to a party – This may sound a bit counterproductive, but it will help you make wise choices at the buffet table. Eating some protein first will also keep you feeling fuller for longer.

Keep hydrated – Alcohol can lead to dehydration (amongst other things). So, to help stave off a headache in the morning and possibly embarrassing situations at the party, try drinking a glass of water in between each glass of your favorite cocktail.

Over indulge in nutrition – The fast pace of Christmas, added to the less nutritious dietary temptations during the holidays, can lead to a sluggish immune system (as well as you feeling sluggish). Balancing indulgences with good healthy foods will help you fight off seasonal sickness, and an expanding waistline.

Wishing you, and yours, a happy and healthy holiday.

Until next year.

Mandy Kendall operates Health Connective in South Lake Tahoe, which aligns wellness seekers with their ideal wellness provider. If you have questions, would like some advice, or would like to request some Qwik-e tips on any health and well-being topic, drop her an email at connect@healthconnective.com or keep an eye out on Lake Tahoe News for regular Qwik-e tips on how to make healthy changes one Quick and Easy step at a time.