



# DAVID DOUGLAS WELLNESS

David Douglas School District  
— WELLNESS —

HAPPY Newsletter

December 2016

## Holiday Stress

The holidays are a time to spend with family and friends and they inevitably bring their own kind of stress. Hopefully this will help you see what causes the some of the holiday stress and how you can alleviate some of it.

### What causes it?

Here are a few things that can contribute to your stress levels around the holiday season.

**Unhappy memories.** The holiday naturally bring up childhood memories and not all of them are happy. If you associate the holidays with a tough time in your life or a loss of a loved one it makes sense that it may be a stressful time for you.

**Toxic relatives.** The holidays often bring together relatives that you spend the rest of the year avoiding.

**What's changed.** Holidays can often highlight the things that have changed in your life; a divorce, a death, people moving to new phases of their lives. Any one of these can disrupt or cause stress.

**What's stayed the same.** For some people the monotonous sameness of the holidays can be depressing. The same food, activities, jokes etc.

**Lowered defenses.** During the holiday season, you're more likely to be stressed out by obligations and errands. It's cold and flu season and your immune system is under assault. It's getting dark earlier each day. You're eating worse, sleeping less, and drinking more. By the time the family gathering rolls around, you're worn out, tense, and fragile. The holiday stress makes it harder to cope with your family than it might be at other times of the year.

**How to combat it!** Here is a list to help you prevent holiday stresses.

### Holiday shopping

- Ask people what they want instead of scouring the earth to find the "perfect" gifts.
- Shop early, when there is more of a selection.
- Stick to your gift budget.

### Planning family get-togethers

- Buy prepared foods, instead of cooking everything from scratch.
- Ask others to bring their favorite dishes.
- Cook and freeze foods ahead of time.

### Scheduling time with family and friends

- Simplify holiday commitments and traditions. Discuss with your family which traditions are most important to you and to them. It's okay to re-evaluate past traditions.
- Allow time for yourself. Remember to do things that *you* enjoy.
- Avoid time crunches by making plans to visit some friends and family soon after the holidays.
- Don't over-schedule yourself. Allow enough time to relax and recover after visiting with others.
- Tell family members about your commitments so you are not struggling against their expectations.
- Travel after rush hour. When driving long distances, give yourself time to stop and rest.



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# Healthy Eating

## Double Chocolate Energy Bites

These little bites are great to have around as a healthier alternative to all the sweets during the holidays.

Prep time 5 mins

Total time 5 mins

Serves: 12

### Ingredients

- 1 cup almond butter (or other nut butter)
- 1.5 cups unsweetened shredded coconut
- 8-10 dried black figs, stems removed
- ½ cup Enjoy Life Chocolate Chip (minis) or dark chocolate chips
- ¼ cup flaxseed meal
- 4 tablespoons raw honey
- 2 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1-2 scoops of the protein powder of your choice
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- pinch of salt

### Instructions

1. Add all ingredients to a food processor (except for the chocolate chips)
2. Turn food processor on.
3. Let ingredients mix until dried figs are completely broken down and incorporated.
4. Then add chocolate chips.
5. Shape mixture into bite size balls.
6. Place in the refrigerator to help harden.
7. Consume.
8. Keep leftovers in the fridge!
9. Be merry.

<http://paleomg.com/double-chocolate-energy-bites/>



# App of the Month

## Sleep Cycle Alarm Clock

Sleep is a key component to a healthy lifestyle. It is recommended that adults get an average of 7-8 hours of sleep per night. This app not only keeps track of the amount and quality of sleep you get; it is an alarm clock designed to wake you up during the lightest phase of sleep. Often an alarm will go off at the time you set it the alarm causing you to wake up more tired. This app is designed to go off when your sleep is the lightest making it easier to get up when the alarm goes off. The best feature is that are the sleep statistics. It tracks environmental factors like exercise, caffeine consumption, eating and stress and how they impact your sleep. This helps make adjustments to improve sleep. For \$1.99 you can start getting a better night sleep.

## Walker Challenge Updates:

- David Douglas is leading all 28 districts in the district to district challenge.
- Hannah Snyder is leading all DDSD employees with over 900K steps!
- There is still time to join before the challenge ends Dec. 13th. Go to: <https://ddsdhappyy.walkertracker.com/>
- The building with the most steps over all will get a healthy catered breakfast for staff.

## Holiday Stress Continued:

### Pausing before the holiday spread

- Avoid overeating and overdrinking, especially alcoholic beverages.
- Avoid starving yourself in anticipation of eating at holiday parties. This approach can lead to eating too much of the wrong foods. Continue to exercise and watch your diet.

### Managing your time

- Set priorities and let go of impossible goals.
- Stop to enjoy the fruits of your labor.
- Don't spend all of your time planning activities for your family. You might end up feeling drained and unappreciated.
- Take the time you need to finish tasks that are important to you. Don't try to complete everything at once.
- Ask others, including the kids, to help you complete chores.
- Rest when your body tells you to.

[http://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/healthy\\_living/hic\\_Stress\\_Management\\_and\\_Emotional\\_Health/hic\\_Managing\\_Holiday\\_Stress](http://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/healthy_living/hic_Stress_Management_and_Emotional_Health/hic_Managing_Holiday_Stress)

<http://www.webmd.com/balance/stress-management/features/home-for-the-holidays-stress-tips?page=2>

## Get out and around Portland

### Pedestrian Only Nights at Peacock Lane

December 15th, 16th and 17th 6-11pm

Enjoy the lights on Portland's Christmas Street without cars! Take transit for an even more car-free experience (lines 15, 20 and 75 have stops close by).

<http://www.peacocklane.org/>

### Holiday Half and 5k

December 11 8am

Get in the holiday spirit and bookend your race season with Portland's favorite winter Half Marathon & 5K in December! The fantastic out and back course starts and finishes at the Adidas North America Campus and winds along Willamette Blvd to the sounds of carolers all along the course!

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/holiday-half-and-5k-2016-registration-26320702931?aff=es2>

### ZooLights

November 25th—January 1st 5-9pm

It wouldn't be the holidays in Portland without a visit to the Oregon Zoo's annual winter festival, ZooLights. As you walk around the zoo, you'll see a dazzling display of a more than million and half lights, and experience your zoo in a whole new light.

<http://www.oregonzoo.org/visit/zoolights>

### Lighting of Maddax Woods

November 19th-December 31st 4-9pm

Enjoy a magical walk down a lighted, accessible path through the Woods and to the viewing platform on the Willamette River. 5785 River St West Linn, OR

<http://westlinnoregon.gov/parksrec/lighting-maddax-woods>

# Workplace Stress

Stress can take a serious toll on your mental and physical health if you're not proactively taking steps to combat its harmful effects. And while practices like yoga and exercise are good long-term strategies for stress reduction, there are times where you need immediate relief from distress.

Workplace stress relievers are helpful for difficult days, and exercises you can perform at your desk can be a lifesaver. Relaxing for a few minutes, could be key to peak performance.

Here are five quick stress relievers you can do at your desk:

## Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Stress can cause you to tense certain muscles in your body. Progressive muscle relaxation lets go of that tension. Focus on slowly tensing and then relaxing your muscles, one group at a time. Start with your toes and work your way up to your neck.

## Visualization

When you can't physically go to your 'happy place,' a quick mental vacation can do wonders for your stress. Visualize one of the most relaxing scenes you can imagine – a beach, the top of a mountain, your favorite chair in the living room, or any other place you'd love to be. Close your eyes and spend a few minutes imagining you are there. A quick mental vacation can relax your mind and body.

## Deep Breathing

Becoming more aware of your breath, and performing a few deep breathing exercises can produce a natural relaxation response. Deep breathing is so powerful that [The American Institute of Stress](#) even named it the 'best stress reduction technique' of all. Deep breathing increases the supply of oxygen to your brain and helps promote a state of calmness.

## Engage Your Senses

Engaging your senses is another way to refocus your attention and help you let go of worry. The key is to find out which sense is most helpful for you to engage. While some people find listening to music calms their minds, others experience maximum stress relief by looking at family photos. Experiment with a variety of activities that engage your senses. Put scented lotion on your hands, give yourself a quick hand massage, eat a piece of your favorite candy, or squeeze a stress ball.

## Laugh

It's true what they say – laughter really is the best medicine. A hearty chuckle stimulates circulation and soothes tension, which relieves some of the physical symptoms of stress. Laughter also increases endorphins released by the brain and produces a relaxed feeling. A willingness to laugh at yourself sometimes can also serve as a good reminder not to take life so seriously, which can do wonders for your stress level.

*\*Excerpt from Forbes.com 5 Powerful Stress Relievers You Can Do At Your Desk*

## Do you have ideas for an upcoming newsletter?

An app you use everyday? A favorite healthy recipe? A great relaxation technique to share with your co-workers?

Please submit ideas to  
[meagan\\_lutu@ddsd40.org](mailto:meagan_lutu@ddsd40.org)



Four square break from grading at Floyd Light