# Enjoying the Holidays Despite Chronic Pain

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## Managing Chronic Pain Over the Holidays

Don’t let the pain control you, or make the holiday season less enjoyable. While it may seem impossible, there are ways to enjoy the holidays despite being in pain. Read on to learn how.

### Guilt Has to Go Away

You may want to have the perfect Christmas and New Year with your family and friends with great time, filled with laughs, in total peace and harmony. Remember that you may experience pain at times, you may feel tired and you may not be able to do as many things as you did years ago. You may take breaks from a party, and rest for a few minutes. If you used to cook several dishes before, now you could buy prepared foods. If you used to spend a few days shopping for gifts, you may want to replace them with a gift certificate. You get together with your loved ones to celebrate the holidays, express your love and don’t need to spend lots or time and energy to prepare for these gatherings.

### Importance of Rules

Avoid the unnecessary, focus on the most important things from your to do list. Talk to your family and see what is really important to do or have this holiday season. Did you drive a couple of hours to visit Aunt Mary and Uncle John each and every Christmas? Maybe this year you can give them a call or have a video chat on Skype and send them a Christmas basket you could order online. Are you the host for the New Year's Eve party? Why not ask a friend to replace you, or just make a reservation at a restaurant. Family traditions are important, but you should adapt them to your own needs and health condition.

### Family

Family is important to you, and you’ll be surrounded by your relatives this time of the year. Let everyone know you do have pain, and this limits the time or energy spent during the holidays. Communication is very important. Some of your relatives may understand you; some will need some time to accept it.

### Think and Plan Ahead

Most of the stress associated with the holiday comes from inadequate planning and organizing. All of a sudden you will have so many other things to do, on top of your usual activities. It’s so common to rush last minute to get something from the store you may forgot (and yes, foggy memory goes hand in hand with pain and fatigue. Ideally, you could start one or two months in advance to prepare for Christmas and New Year. Remember, the importance of the rules when you create your to-do list. Some activities can be completely avoided, while others can be delegated to others. The next thing you should consider is to find the easiest way to accomplish your tasks. Remember that you will have good days and bad days, when the pain may not allow you to work too hard .

Don’t push yourself and listen to your body. Take extra care of yourself when you have lots of pain - take a hot, relaxing bath, go for a walk or book a massage. Have a healthy, happy holiday!