

## 15 Stress-less Holiday Season Tips



Finding time for gift shopping is difficult. Putting together a strategy that works with your schedule can make all the difference, rather than feeling like you're being driven like one of Santa's reindeer.

There are many simple ways to get to the bottom of your shopping list in record time and have plenty of time left over to enjoy the season.

- 1. Shop early.** Start with a list of who you will be buying.
- 2. Keep a holiday shopping file on family and friends.** Instead of a piece of paper, use index cards and write one person's name on each card, and keep them all together with a rubber band.
- 3. Call ahead before you shop offline.** Why go 6 places looking for that one holiday gift when you could just make a few phone calls?
- 4. Make a list and check it twice.** Combine catalog and in-store shopping. It works for Santa, and it will work for you. Major catalogs allow you to place orders around the clock.
- 5. Get help.** Use the gift wrapping services that many businesses provide this time of year. Delegate and assign some tasks to other family members.
- 6. Give yourself the gift of holiday stress relief.** Patronize a local bakery, hiring a cleaning service to clean your home, or even having your holiday season party catered.
- 7. Avoid rushing around.** Combine running errands with Christmas shopping so why make separate trips?
- 8. Avoid crowds by shopping during off hours.** If possible, take a day off from work and plan to shop when the stores open for widest selection and most courteous service, and shorter lines.
- 9. Take advantage of services offered by malls.** Also, more and more stores are offering special rebates and free gifts.
- 10. Limit your shopping.** "Shop-until-you-drop" sprees usually lead to impulse buying, exhaustion and frustration. This is one time of the year that people make time to spend with each other. Take a friend along and get your shopping done together and have fun at the same time!
- 11. Dress smart and wear comfortable walking shoes.** Opt for a fanny pack or backpack instead of a purse for hands-free shopping.
- 12. Newsletters bring friends closer together.** Instead of spending hours writing and sending Christmas cards, enjoy the holiday activities by creating a Christmas letter and copy it onto pretty designed Christmas paper. (Use some humor and exaggerate a little bit just to give a bit of entertainment).

- 13. Take some time for yourself.** Step out of the holiday rush and spend some time for yourself, even if it's just a lunch with a friend.
- 14. Take the time to drive around.** Enjoy the Christmas lights, attend a special holiday event, or just take a long hot bath.
- 15. Plan ahead for the next holiday season.** Christmas supplies are often available at discounted prices in the week after Christmas! It's easy enough to buy holiday gifts any time of year--all it takes is some planning. And sometimes, a gift card is the "ideal gift" so that person can shop at "their favorite store."