

Planning Tips for the Holiday Season

Tips provided by Sandra Gartz, CPC Board Member and Leader of the Kitchener Waterloo Fibromyalgia Support Group

Basic Tips:

- Start early. Conserve your energy by being ahead of your deadline
- Set up Dec. 23 as a finish date.
- Plan. Put all your commitments on the calendar, then decide if you can manage them or if some need to be rescheduled.
- Pace yourself. Use a timer. Pacing is more important on your good days. On your bad days your body/pain paces you.
- Make lists. Keep a notebook with 1 list per page. Cross it off when it is done. Tear out the page when complete.(very satisfying, especially if you crumple it up)
- Say "NO", and mean it!
- Allow others to help. When they ask, say "Yes, please!"
- Delegate jobs to others. "Would you mind helping...?"
- Plan a daily rest, or an extra one. Rest before you think you should.
- Aim for a finish date of 2 days before. You'll have 2 days to rest!!
- Take care of yourself. You deserve to enjoy the holidays too!

Gift Shopping:

- Get a wish list from the family.
- Make your list and check it twice, just like Santa!
- Use file cards or a note pad 1) for your gift ideas 2) for your purchases and for whom. Keep it in your purse/pocket for quick reference when you are shopping.
- Make lists from catalogues and flyers; let your fingers do the walking.
- Phone to make sure the item is in stock and have it put aside.
- Knowing what you are looking for saves time and energy.
- Shop by phone, catalogue or internet.
- Ask someone to pick up an item for you when they are out.
- Don't do it all in one day. Remember, Rome wasn't built in a day
- Do you need to carry everything in your purse? Take the essentials with you.
- Don't carry - use a shopping cart.
- Ask someone to come with you to carry/push the cart.
- Ask someone to come with you, who can take the purchases to the car.
- Shop all year for your gifts and keep those file cards up to date.
- Aim for Dec. 15 as a finish date .



Gift Giving:

- Use your file cards/lists when wrapping and labeling your gifts.
- Use gift bags and boxes.
- Check out the dollar store for gift bags, decorative boxes, tins and premade bows.
- Do Christmas cards EARLY and use computer address labels.
- "Write" your letter on the computer and hand write a note to personalize it.
- Personalize - Bake or make a gift. Christmas tins are a nice touch.

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Meal Preparation:

- Make menus for meals and use these to grocery shop.
- K.I.S.S.- Keep it simple, silly.
- Choose recipes that can be made ahead.
- Use tried and true recipes to reduce the cook's stress.
- Prepare ahead and freeze if possible.
- Get a cook from frozen turkey.
- Cook the turkey the day before, carve and refrigerate it in a 9x13 pan lined with lettuce and cover with foil. Clean up is done!
- Use "Look" bags for cooking meat to reduce clean up time.
- Make Stuffing in the Crock Pot. Put onion/spices inside turkey for flavour.
- Use canned/frozen vegetables to reduce preparation time/energy. e.g. turnips
- Easy peeling turnip: prick outside, place on paper towel (to absorb the wax) in microwave 20-25 min. on medium power. Peels easily!
- Host a Pot Luck or have your guests bring a dish.
- Have food ready early and keep it warm in the oven.
- Set the table ahead of time and cover with a sheet.
- Use disposable dishes, cutlery and cups.
- Use Buffet style for serving.

Entertaining:

In your home:

- K.I.S.S. Keep it simple, silly.
- Plan afternoon events or for your best time.
- Prepare ahead as much as possible.
- If you are the family host, have your extended family come over the day before and all clean together. Everyone has fun and many hands make light work. This works well if your family rotates the host house yearly
- Make a "To Do List" and post it on the fridge. When someone says, "What can I do", you can say "Any thing on the list is great!"
- Rest until the first guest arrives. Lying down for even 5 minutes refreshes you.
- Set up a drink area and ask everyone to serve themselves.
- Place out any snacks and ask everyone to help themselves.
- Ask your guests to bring something.
- Delegate jobs to others. "Would you mind helping....?"
- Allow others to help. If they ask, say "Yes, please!"
- Ask someone, ahead of time, to help with the clean up.
- Put away the essentials and leave cleanup for the next day.

Outside your home:

- Arrive on time and leave before fatigue or pain levels escalate
- Plan afternoon visits or for your best time.
- Get dressed, then lay down for 30 minutes before you leave
- Pick a comfortable seat. Bring your back rest with you.
- Stand up, sit down, what ever you need to do.
- Take a cab, don't drive when tired, it's the same as drinking and driving!!!



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Recipe:

Turkey Stuffing in the Crockpot – 5 quart size

In a skillet melt: 1 cup margarine/butter

Sautee: 2 cups onion, chopped

2 cups celery, chopped

¼ cup parsley sprigs

2-4oz cans sliced drained mushrooms

Pour this mix over 12 to 13 cups bread crumbs in a very large mixing bowl.

Add: 1 tsp poultry seasoning

½ tsp each salt & pepper

1 ½ tsp sage

1 tsp dried thyme

½ tsp marjoram

Mix well. Pour in enough broth to moisten - 2 to 2 ½ cups chicken or turkey broth

Add 2 eggs, beaten. Mix well. Pack lightly into crock pot. Cover. Cook on high 45 minutes, reduce to low 4 to 8 hours.

Quicker and easier Stuffing:

- Use 2-7 ounce packages of stuffing mix and 3 to 3 ½ cups broth, omit herbs & salt. Use an alcohol delivery service.
- Make Rice Krispie squares using microwave directions.
- Go to church/community bazaars and get home baking.
- Have a cookie baking party or cookie exchange

