



Francisco Torres, M.D.

December 2024

Manage YOUR Stress throughout December

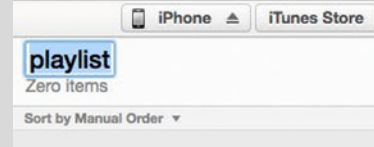
As we think about the holiday season, we remember everyone around us to include our children, spouses, significant others, and family members. We seem to forget to take care of us though in the midst of the chaos of the holiday season.

As we tell others around us to do self-care do we listen do we take that same advice to heart for ourselves? Probably not, it is for someone else not for us. Some of us are not only dealing with stress during the holidays but also grief. It can be a difficult time of year for a great number of reasons.

Stress at work of not completing all of our goals planned back in January due to unforeseen additional projects increase the anxiety as well.

Here are some ideas/ways to make December a little less stressful:

- **Keep a gratitude journal:** Write things you are grateful for and what you have accomplished throughout the day. This will remind you of the good things in your life and improve your mood.
- **Make a new holiday recipe:** It can be cookies, pies, breads or anything new in general. By doing a new recipe, you are keeping your mind active and potentially a new recipe the family loves along the way.
- **Get creative: writing and crafts:** Legos without the instructions, painting, drawing anything that gets your creative juices flowing. Getting your creativity flowing can actually improve your overall well-being.
- **Think of something you want to improve:** Learning the piano or another instrument is another way to challenge yourself and can feel rewarding when you succeed.
- **Make a new music playlist:** We will typically have new music likes and can change up our song lists to include our new song choices and mix our old with the new. Of course, then you will want to listen to the new playlist.
- **Plan to take a break from your phone, for one day:** Get to know yourself again and remove yourself from social media for at least one day.





- **Prep for the week:** You can reduce your weekly stress by prepping in advance for the upcoming week.
- **Opt out:** It is okay to say no to an upcoming party or holiday event. Prioritize your mental health. You are worth it.
- **Step outside your comfort Zone:** Yes, this can be scary.. You will meet new people and may find a new hobby that you enjoy in the process.
- **Watch your favorite movie:** The holiday season brings about those moments of nostalgia. Watching a movie that you have seen multiple times can help you relax and regain your inner peace.
- **De-clutter your space:** Living/working in a cluttered environment, can lead to stress. Take time out to clean and remove those items no longer in use. You may find a more peaceful home or office.
- **Take time to sit in alone with yourself:** Meditation and taking 15-30 minutes of alone time with yourself is important to rejuvenate your mind and body and prepare for the stressful days ahead.
- **Control your breathing:** Learning to breathe when stressed can help alleviate anxiety and tension. Breathe in slowly for four seconds, hold for four seconds, breathe out for four seconds, and repeat as needed.
- **Go to the gym/walk outside:** Exercise and getting outdoors can increase your energy levels and improve your overall mental health. Take 30 minutes to walk outside before the stress impacts your daily life.

If you are experiencing urgent mental health challenges, please call 988 for immediate assistance.

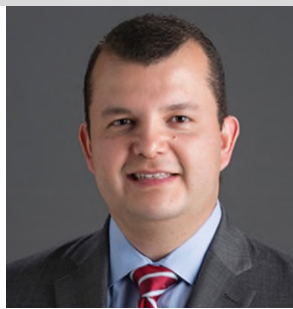
You can also reach out to 210.268.1698 for assistance in finding an in network counselor.



Resources:

<https://centerstone.org/our-resources/health-wellness/25-self-care-tips-for-december/>

Article provided by:
 Francisco Torres, MD
Board Certified Family Medicine
 Best Doctors in San Antonio®
 Bridges to Excellence®
Hablo Español



HealthTexas – Southwest Military
 1802 SW Military Dr.
 San Antonio, TX 78221
 Hours: M,T,TH, & F 7:00 am – 5:00 pm
 W 10 am – 5:00 pm
 Phone: (210) 924.2337

Healthy Recipe

<https://www.uvmhealth.org/healthsource/6-snack-foods-and-3-easy-recipes-reduce-your-stress>

Stress Reduction recipes

Blueberry Almond Protein Bars

By: Stephanie Gail, DCN, RD, CD

10 Servings

Ingredients:

- 1 ½ cups raw almonds, rough chop
- ½ cups raw pepita seeds (or unsalted sunflower seeds)
- 2/3 cup puffed rice
- 2/3 cup dried blueberries
- ½ cup coconut flakes, unsweetened
- 1 tbs chia seeds or hemp seeds
- 1/3 cup brown rice syrup (or ¼ cup honey)
- ½ tsp sea salt
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1 tsp turmeric
- 1 tsp vanilla



Directions:

1. Line an 8"x8" baking dish with parchment paper and set aside
2. In a large mixing bowl combine almonds, pepita seeds, puffed rice, dried blueberries, coconut and chia or hemp seeds. Toss and set aside.
3. In a small pan, heat brown rice syrup, salt, cinnamon, turmeric and vanilla over medium-high heat until boiling, stirring occasionally. Let the sauce oil for 4 to 5 minutes.
4. When sauce is ready, pour it evenly over the almond mixture and quickly stir the mixture until it is evenly coated with the sauce. Move fast, it hardens quickly!
5. Quickly transfer the mixture to the prepared baking dish and press it firmly into the dish into an even layer.
6. Let bars cool for 30 minutes
7. Carefully lift the parchment paper from the baking dish and transfer to a cutting board. Peel the parchment paper away from the bars.
8. Cut the bars into the desired shapes and sizes.
9. Place into a sealed container and store at room temperature.
10. The bars will last up to 10 days, or you can freeze them for up to three months.

Resource: The University of Vermont Health Network, May 6th 2021, retrieved December, 9th 2024, Stephanie Gail, DCN, RD, CD, is the Clinical Nutrition Manager at the University of Vermont Medical Center.

<https://www.uvmhealth.org/healthsource/6-snack-foods-and-3-easy-recipes-reduce-your-stress>

Nutrition: Total Fat: 3.8 g | Cholesterol 0 mg | Total Carbohydrate 21.1g | Sugars 11.8 | Saturated Fat 11g | Sodium 54.1mg | Dietary Fiber 2.6g | Protein 3g



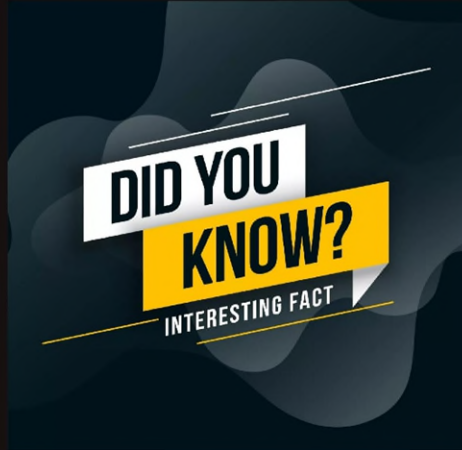
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As a valued Aetna Whole Health member:
You have a dedicated Case Management Team?
You can reach them at:
210.268.1698 or QPICCM@healthtexas.org



The team engages when:

1. Screenings Due
2. Navigating Chronic Conditions
3. Emergency Room or In Patient visit follow-ups

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