

## Make Merry this Holiday Season: Stress-Reducing Tips for Caregivers

The holiday season is a time of celebration, and getting overwhelmed by holiday activities isn't uncommon. Yet for individuals caring for an elderly relative or someone who requires care at home, the added stress of the season can make merriment quickly turn to misery.

The senior population in the United States will reach 77 million by the end of the decade, and with nearly one out of four U.S. households already providing care to a relative or friend, this statistic becomes a major concern. But assisting a loved one during the holidays doesn't need to turn you into Ebenezer Scrooge. There are several things caregivers can do to maintain a festive frame of mind.

As the holidays approach, establish an event schedule. One of the major causes of caregiver burnout is fatigue, so don't be afraid to limit activities and schedule "down time" to relax and rest. It's also important in this busy season to maintain a healthy diet and get regular exercise. Caregivers who take care of themselves are less likely to feel isolated or depressed.

Keep decorations simple, limiting them to one room. To prevent injury, eliminate extension cords, remove any possible tripping hazards, and move breakable objects out of reach.

Caregiving can be stressful, and relationships frequently suffer. This holiday season, focus on creating happy memories. Start simple family traditions by renting a holiday movie or making a scrumptious treat.

Finally, consider hiring a professional caregiver to assist with chores or provide care so you can take a moment to relax, walk or complete holiday shopping.

Barth Holohan, president of Continuum, a care managed home care agency in St. Louis, recognizes the need for respite care. "It's easy for caregivers to become overwhelmed with the burden of day-to-day care. The extra stress of the holidays can easily lead to burnout. Continuum prides itself on the ability to provide professional caregiving to families whenever the need arises, whether that is during the holiday rush or a regular week." Visit [ContinuumCare.com](http://ContinuumCare.com) for Continuum's Tip Sheet for Stress Free Holidays.

Continuum offers Care for Life and has been helping those with care needs in the St. Louis area since 2002. They offer a wide range of services, from care managed in-home care for people of all ages, to personal emergency medical alert systems, care management and bill paying.



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Barth Holohan, MSW, MBA  
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