



Heart-Healthy Winter

exercise & reduce stress

The holidays are near, so why are you irritable, not sleeping and gaining weight?

Fact: Most people experience their worst stress of the year around the “happiest season of them all.”

The Marshfield Clinic and Ministry Health Care heart care team knows that reducing stress can lead to a happier, brighter and healthier holiday season.

Here are a few heart-healthy stress reducing tips:

- ♥ Take some time out to organize and prioritize. Taking time to catch your breath and reassess will help.
- ♥ Don't do it all yourself – delegate! Make expectations clear to your loved ones, and lower your standards a touch to get it all done.
- ♥ Set a budget and stick to it – you can't get your child everything he or she desires! Even Santa Claus has limited funds.
- ♥ Be realistic about your relatives. Don't try to solve family issues around the holidays.
- ♥ When the kids come home from college, set ground rules. They forget that it's your house and that there are rules. Remind them.
- ♥ Continue your exercise regimen during this busy season. It's a great way to steal a few moments by yourself!
- ♥ Turn off the TV, grab a loved one and play in the snow; or get out and look at holiday lights.

Remember, we all want the perfect holiday. It's human nature. Lower expectations and do your best to enjoy.

Snow Shoveling— Warm Up, Bend Your Knees and Breathe!

While snow shoveling expends high energy, it has a high incidence of injury, including cardiac events. Conditioning and proper technique can minimize those risks.

- ♥ Breathe evenly. Exhale during pushing or lifting snow. Inhale between. Avoid holding your breath. This can cause changes in your blood pressure and increase stress on the heart.
- ♥ Pace yourself. Take 5- or 10-minute breaks so fatigued muscles can rest. This will help you maintain proper technique and avoid injury.
- ♥ Warm up before shoveling: Walk around the block or step in place; twist torso from side to side, gently, and swing arms in large circles
- ♥ Keep knees bent—make shoveling more of a leg exercise than an arm exercise.
- ♥ Keep toes pointed toward where you are moving. Avoid twisting at the waist.
- ♥ Elbows should be at or near your sides. It's best to push, rather than lift snow. Never throw snow over your shoulder—it may injure your back

