

Stress SOS!

Hypnotherapist Ursula James suggests seven ways to make the festive season as stress free as possible.



WORDS: URSULA JAMES. PHOTOGRAPHS: GETTY IMAGES AND SHUTTERSTOCK

1 MAKE IT PERSONAL

If there are family and friends you won't see this Christmas and it's causing you to feel stressed, why not write them a heartfelt letter? It may not be the same as seeing them in person, but putting pen to paper – rather than text or email – is so much more special. Tell them how much you love them, what they mean to you, and why they are important.

2 PLAN IN ADVANCE

Do as much food prep in the days leading up to Christmas Day as you possibly can and don't try to be perfect!

3 SHARE THE LOAD

Give everyone in your household or bubble a small job for the day. They may be in charge of setting the table or washing up. This means you don't end up doing everything.

4 MAKE A VIDEO

Bringing some cheer into the festivities is a great stress-buster. Get your household together and mime to a carol, recording it to

send to relatives who can't be there. Why not dress up and make it silly?

5 GET OUT AND GO WALKING

If you can do this as a family, so much the better, but even if it's by yourself it will still help you walk away any worries. Just a small walk around the block will help you to feel calmer.

6 GIVE GRATITUDE

Spread the love by giving a gift to someone you see regularly, but is not a close friend or relative. Perhaps someone who has been a lockdown 'regular face' for you? It may be the lady on the checkout, the post person, or the people who collect your bins. Showing gratitude will bring you joy. You could even do it anonymously.

7 LISTEN IN

If things are getting on top of you, take 15 minutes to shut yourself in the bedroom and listen to a relaxing audio on your phone. Lay down and try listening to my soothing soundtrack at ursulajames.com/xmas.

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