



How To Uninvite Nerve Pain From Your Holidays

Loma Linda University Health, Dr. Bussell, December 11, 2019

The holiday season is upon us, and you know what that means — baking, decorating, holiday festivals, traveling to loved ones, and office parties. The holidays bring the opportunity to spend quality time with friends and family. However, it can also be a hard time for those with nerve pain. Before missing out on the festivities, remember that minor adjustments can make the difference in your pain symptoms. Try these tips to successfully manage your nerve pain during the holidays.

Traveling in confined spaces 101 Crammed seats and long flights while traveling with nerve pain can be difficult. Nerves become stretched during long, upright confinement, causing symptoms of dyskinesia, numbness, tingling and restlessness. Investing in an aisle seat can enable you to stretch out as needed and easily get up to walk around when the fasten seat belt sign is finally turned off. All of those movements can help lessen the pressure on your nerves. And remember to stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water. Movement is also important when driving. Taking advantage of walking in rest areas or simply stretching in your seat.

Holiday travel can be quite stressful, and proper management of that stress is necessary to avoid aggravating your nerve pain. No matter your traveling method, look at what you can do to minimize the stress involved. This can include planning to leave at a time that is most optimal for traffic, creating a fun playlist to listen to, purchasing an audiobook and packing your favorite snacks. All of these small things can help in making the trip more comfortable, less stressful and less painful to your nerves.

Prepare for holiday activities The holiday season can usher in a slew of pain-related problems. Nerve pain can occur while standing on your feet for too long while shopping, hanging decorations, or wrapping presents. While these can't be perfectly avoided, the trick is mitigating what you can, and that starts with knowing your limits.

If you know your carpal tunnel will act up after wrapping so many presents, make it a time for bonding by inviting friends or family to watch a movie and wrap with you. Going to a parade or outdoor choir event for that loved one? Make sure you prepare for the cold by bundling up and wearing loose-fitting shoes with good arch support. Make sure you plan for breaks as needed, don't push beyond what you do the rest of the year, and take your medications as directed by your physician.

Share your favorite dish Cookies, cakes, and candy — the holidays are full of sugary temptations. While there is nothing wrong with a little treat once in a while, people with nerve pain and food sensitivities know all too well how these can cause discomfort. Before indulging in that treat at the office potluck, consider advocating for healthier options with your coworkers by bringing a healthier dish you make well. There are plenty of cuisine options, from dark chocolate treats, flavorful veggie dishes and healthy crockpot meals that can be the star of any holiday party.

Avoid the binge Whether we ate too much, didn't want to miss a moment of our teams' game, or lethargically wanted to marathon a TV show for the day, we've all binged at some point. The winter vacations beg us to slow down and relax. While taking time to relax can be a good thing, it's important to stay accountable for our health. One recommendation is to have an accountability partner for the holidays so you can help each other stick to exercise routines. If you do want to binge watch a show or game, plan some fun movement in there. Take advantage of commercial breaks to stretch and have your family do it with you. While sitting, flex your toes and stretch your feet to keep the pressure alleviated. For movie marathons, plan an intermission where you walk around the block or go out to grab healthy snacks from the store. Whenever possible, find a moment to include some movement for the body and your body will thank you.