



# Happier Holiday Checklist

## To-do:

- If you haven't already, decide the basics: Who? Where? When? Let guests know the plan. A quick call, e-mail, or even a formal invitation will do the trick.
- Create a holiday folder. This is simply a place to jot down notes, menu and recipe ideas, and possible gifts. It can be a file folder or a Pinterest board, but by simply have a go-to spot you will save time and mental energy!
- Jot down your priorities. If you are like most people, exercise, diet, and sleep get pushed to the bottom of the list during the holiday season, leaving you squeezing into your clothes, prone to sickness, and just plain grouchy. Thinking through how you are going to maintain these priorities and navigate temptations now will make you more successful.
- Make a shopping list and an errands list. Keep it in a handy spot so you can add to it easily.
- Make a menu and determine what could be made ahead. Put those on your calendar for this week or next.
- If you are hosting, determine what dishes guests could possibly bring. Now, when your aunt calls to see what she could bring, you'll be able to give her a few suggestions.
- Decide when you want to tackle decorating, baking, cards, shopping. Schedule a block of time for each of these items and put it on your calendar now.
- Think through some of the things you want to make sure you have time for, maybe holiday crafts with the kids, light-seeing, visiting that older relative. Schedule a block of time for these and put them on your calendar. By putting these items on your calendar you are creating the holidays you *want* for your family and staying true to your mission statement.
- Order holiday cards.
- Set up a small wrapping station or caddy. Just the essentials – tape, scissors, labels, tissue paper, wrapping paper, and a few pens. Missing items? Just add them to your grocery list. *You aren't in a rush because you are planning ahead!*
- Double-check your gift list. If you think of people as you go, that's ok. Just make sure you add them to the list so you start next year's holiday prep with a more complete list. If you have gifts you have to ship, make sure you know when you need to have it to the post office.
- Add a few hostess gifts to your list.
- Review your budget and how you plan to maximize it.
- Decide how and when to shop. Are you going to get it all done on Amazon while you watch your favorite holiday movie or are you going to head to the stores?





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## **To-do (continued – yep, there's a lot to do!)**

- As you shop, keep receipts. Jot down the recipient of the gift on the back of the receipt and place it in your holiday folder.
- Get wrapping. Make a night of it. Turn on your holiday music and ask the kids to help.
- Let yourself off the hook. Even with the best of plans, you have to be flexible. After all, you can't control everything! If there are a few to-do's that haven't been tackled, consider letting yourself off the hook. For example, if you need to get your outside lights up, but are dreading it and know it will be a half-hearted attempt, skip it this year. Big picture, some of these things are just not that important.
- Double-check holiday outfits. Have the kids lay out their outfits for school programs and family gatherings. What's missing or needed? Add it to your errand list.

## **Some after-holiday tasks to consider:**

- Tackle all the holiday photos you took and maybe even frame a few favorites! Order extras to add to thank you notes.
- Write thank you notes.
- Think through how and where you want to store holiday décor and your holiday folders.

For a week-by-week guide, check out new Happier Holiday Toolbox at <http://freshlyorganized.com/our-services/toolboxes>





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## Tips:

- As invitations come in, put each one on the calendar and stash the invitation in your holiday folder. Remember, you are not obligated to attend every event. Turn down the ones that take the season from fun to overwhelming.
- Honor traditions, but be flexible. If you have a tradition that you and your family are losing enthusiasm for, then skip it this year and try something new. You can always go back to it next year if you want.
- Don't skip out on sleep! Remember, at the beginning of the season when you thought through how to maintain exercise, diet, and sleep habits? Now is the time to reinforce those strategies.
- Stock up on gift cards! We at Freshly Organized love gift cards because giving an experience is often more memorable than giving more stuff. Most people tend to think gift cards are impersonal. Not true, if you give it some thought. Think: favorite restaurant, favorite hobby, favorite store, a special treat.
- Having a few extra generic gift cards on hand doesn't hurt either! They are ideal for people who might have slipped your mind.

## Treats:

- Pick up some beautiful flowers or seasonal décor to get in the mood. You don't have to spend a lot. Check the discounted section of the floral department in the grocery store and split the flowers into vases.
- Put together a play list of your favorite holiday music.
- Did those holiday cards show up yet? Head to your favorite coffee shop to address envelopes and drop at the post office on the way home.
- Schedule one hour (at least) this week to do something that rejuvenates yourself. This could be as simple as curling up on the couch to read or as luxurious as a mani-pedi!

