



# Freshly Organized's Happier Holiday Toolbox

Welcome to a happier holiday!

Freshly Organized knows that the secret to enjoying the holidays, and life, more is by simply being a bit more organized. Our goal is to help you eliminate the rush and stress that most people feel during the holidays and help you focus on what matters most to you.

We've outlined some basic holiday to-do's for each week until the New Year's. Of course, there maybe a few unique items that you'll have to add, but this list can help guide you to a more relaxed, enjoyable, and happier holiday.

## **Week of 10/31/16: Make a plan**

Grab a cup of coffee, a pad of paper and a pen (or your phone if you prefer) and spend some time thinking about the upcoming holidays. We promise you - planning is the most powerful organizational tool! It helps you optimize your time, energy, and budget.

### **To-do:**

- Create a holiday mission statement for Thanksgiving and Christmas.
- If you haven't already, decide the basics for each holiday: Who? Where? When?
- Create a holiday folder for Thanksgiving and one for Christmas. 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!
- Update your calendar for the next few weeks.
- 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.

*If your Thanksgiving has you traveling, you need to make travel arrangements ASAP. Know your travel plans for December? Make those arrangements now too.*

**Tip:** 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.

**Treat:** 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.





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## **Week of 11/7/16: Get goin'**

This week focus on some easy prep work you can do now that will make the week of Thanksgiving much easier.

### **To-do:**

- Let guests know the plan. A quick call, e-mail, or even a formal invitation will do the trick.
- Make the menu for Thanksgiving. A google search of Thanksgiving meal planners will give you tons of suggestions.
- Make a shopping list and an errands list. Keep it in a handy spot so you can add to it easily.
- Look at the 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.
- Locate and clean serving dishes that are in storage.
- Check cooking, baking, and place setting supplies for missing items. Add items to shopping list.

*If your Thanksgiving has you traveling, use this week to arrange for pet care and to postpone mail.*

**Tip:** Don't be afraid to delegate. All food does not need to be produced in your kitchen! When someone offers to bring something, he or she wants to help. Accept it graciously.

**Treat:** Celebrate the season with an easy, family-friendly craft. Maybe some sort of décor or place cards that can be used on Thanksgiving or, better yet, a family display that shares what you are grateful for this season.

### **Notes:**





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## **Week of 11/14/16: Prep, prep, prep!**

This week is the right time to start cooking and cleaning! Use this weekend to get all prep work and cleaning done.

### **To-do:**

- Schedule a few hours for cleaning this weekend – and get some help from the whole family!
- Decide when you are going to shop.
- Spend a little time doing prep work. What can you chop, dice, or slice today and store in the fridge until it's cook time?
- Throw together a healthy freezer-friendly dinner for Wednesday and avoid that pizza delivery. You'll be happy you did!
- If needed, purchase a small hostess gift and write a short note.

**Tip:** Work as a family to clean. Try starting in the basement and working your way up.

**Treat:** Make some pumpkin bars or an easy apple dessert as a reward for your family's cleaning session and as a way to relish the season a bit.

### **Notes:**





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## **Week of 11/21/16: Turkey Time!**

With all the prep work you've done, you'll be feeling calm and confident this week.

### **To-do:**

- Quick clean-up on Wednesday or Thursday morning.
- Set the table on Wednesday. Ask your family to help you make it look beautiful! Or keep them busy by asking them to make place cards.
- Delegate. Ask your family to help with preparation.
- Relax and enjoy. When dinner is over, it's time to relax. Enjoy some football or get some games out to play.
- Write a quick thank you to the hostess or send a quick e-mail to guests letting them know you enjoyed celebrating with them.

**Tip:** Take a family photo! Find a great spot outdoors and make it the new go-to spot for a Thanksgiving photo.

**Treat:** You've done a lot the last few weeks! Celebrate all your hard work on Friday morning with a good cup of coffee, warm bath, or even hit the movies.

### **Notes:**





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## **Week of 11/28/16: Refocus**

Thanksgiving is behind us, and hopefully, it was a beautiful, relatively stress-free day. Now, December is upon us and it's time to get focused.

### **To-do:**

- Review your holiday mission statement.
- 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.
- Remember that photo you took last week, transform it into a holiday card and order.
- Get your mailing list together and updated.
- 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!*

**Tip:** 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.

**Treat:** Put together a play list of your favorite holiday music.

### **Notes:**





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## **Week of 12/5/16: Get in the spirit**

Remember why you put in the time to plan this holiday - less time running around means more time to actually enjoy the holiday season. This week enjoy the spirit of the season.

### **To-do:**

- 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? Maybe a combo.
- 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.
- Bake and freeze. The early part of December is a great time to get some baking done. Even if it's just get the cookie dough ready for decorating. One less thing you'll have to tackle.
- While you are in the kitchen, consider freezing a couple favorite dinners for those upcoming busy nights.

**Tip:** 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.

**Double Tip:** Having a few extra generic gift cards on hand doesn't hurt either! They are ideal for people who might have slipped your mind.

**Treat:** 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.

### **Notes:**





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## **Week of 12/12/16 – Are you feelin' it?**

As things pick up, it's a great time to review your holiday mission statement again. Remember, you can choose to keep things as simple as you want.

### **To-do:**

- Get wrapping. Make a night of it. Turn on your holiday play list 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.

**Tip:** 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.

**Treat:** 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!

### **Notes:**





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## **Week of 12/19/16: Relax and enjoy!**

At this point, we hope that all the work you've done has paid off and very little remains on your holiday to-do list!

We hope you have a beautiful holiday and that our Happier Holiday Toolbox made a difference. If it did, please let us know! We would love to hear from you.

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### **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.

