



# DECEMBER 2015

## 'TIS THE SEASON

First there is Halloween with all of the candy. (The trick is not to buy the treats until the last minute. Or, buy what the kids will enjoy but you don't!). Then, there is Thanksgiving. I am a firm believer in enjoying the day to its fullest: turkey, trimmings, dessert, wine, football, family, and friends. The trouble with Thanksgiving is that it is the "gateway" holiday. It begins as a traditional celebration of thanks for the bounty of the autumn harvest and ends two sizes larger on January 2. The average American gains seven pounds during the six-week festival.

Right now we are in the thick of it: parties, luncheons, goodies and gifts of good cheer. During this time we all depart from our routines. We change our schedules to accommodate gatherings, shopping and travel. We eat and drink more festively. We spend beyond necessity. We hopefully reconnect with friends and family. We wear holiday clothes that may not so subtly remind us that our bodies have somehow morphed in the last year. We set our expectations high and end up disappointed. Any one of these behaviors contributes to stress. Taken collectively, they are nothing short of toxic — particularly for women.

Over the past 50 years, the 10 most stressful life events for women have changed. Most noteworthy is the stress associated with three events:



**CHILDREN  
LEAVING HOME**



**DISRUPTION OF  
PERSONAL HABITS**



**MAJOR  
HOLIDAYS**

Why have these stress ratings changed so much? Women have acquired more roles. We are still daughters, sisters, wives, mothers and homemakers, yet now we are often full time wage-earners outside of the home. Despite the increased number of roles, women have not relaxed their standards to accommodate the increased responsibilities. They still tackle each role as if it were their only one.

Woman unknowingly compare themselves to idealized models, whether in their own circles or in the media, and consistently find themselves falling short. To compensate, they sleep less, caffeinate more, micromanage their eating and exercise, and ruminate about their shortcomings. The holidays represent the perfect storm of personal habit disruption (often unintentional) and unachievable goals (i.e. *what would Martha Stewart do?*). How else could such a dramatic stress increase be attributable to such a relatively short time and joyous period?



# the supplement

FACILITATING VITALITY

What is the antidote? There are many, but unfortunately women tend to wait for permission from others to take care of themselves. They push through their lists wanting it to look effortless, but secretly hoping that someone notices how much work they are doing and that the someone will invite them to sit down. Well here it is ladies, I know how much work it is and I am giving you permission to:



**SLEEP 7 HOURS**



**ENJOY LUNCH AWAY FROM YOUR DESK**



**DELEGATE - YOU ARE NOT ALONE!**



**RECONNECT WITH THOSE YOU CHERISH**



**TAKE A WALK, BATH, OR DEEP BREATH**



**MAKE TIME FOR SOMETHING YOU ENJOY**

Most importantly, give yourself a break. Reassess your role models. Do they make sense? And by the way, the first thing to cross off of that list is baking the traditional family recipe for fruit cake. Nobody really likes it anyway.

## THE SLIPPERY SLOPE CHALLENGE

Over the holidays, challenge yourself to any three daily acts of mindfulness. Some examples include:



- Getting a minimum of six hours of sleep.
- Drinking eight glasses of water.
- Eating five servings of fruits and vegetables.
- Limiting alcohol servings to no more than three/day and nine/week.
- Limiting caffeine to two servings, consumed before 2PM.
- Calling a friend that you haven't spoken with in too long.
- Writing a thank you note.
- Making a list of three things for which you are grateful.
- Taking a nice long walk.

The holidays can be a "Slippery Slope" leading to seven pounds of regret. They needn't be.

### RESOURCES



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Patricia M. Fuller has dedicated the last 17 years to designing and delivering wellness programs as a project manager and contractor for PricewaterhouseCoopers, LLP. Her training events earn consistently excellent ratings for her holistic approach and her real world application.

Prior to concentrating in wellness, Pat taught accounting and auditing as an adjunct professor at the University of Tampa. She earned her CPA designation in 1992 as a senior associate for Coopers & Lybrand. She has a Masters in Business Administration from the University of Utah.

Pat has a PhD in holistic nutrition. In 2010, she was board certified by the Holistic Nutrition Credentialing Board. Her areas of research include stress management and eating habits. She is a Certified Wellcoach and a member of the Institute of Coaching. She is an annual attendee to The Harvard Medical School Conference, Coaching In Leadership & Healthcare.

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