

# Stress before and at Christmas tends to be positive for most people

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One week before Christmas a MedUni Vienna recreation researcher gives the all-clear: from a psychological point of view the stress before and at Christmas tends to be positive for most people. And the time around Christmas can be made even more pleasant with simple tricks.

According to [epidemiological studies](#), the time in the run-up to Christmas is less stressful than you would think. Gerhard Blasche, a recreation researcher at the Institute for Environmental Hygiene at the Center for Public Health at the MedUni Vienna, also states that at Christmas time psychiatric services are less in demand than at other

times.

However, the number of depressive illnesses does increase at Christmas time, for which Blasche has a simple explanation: "Winter is responsible for this with its shorter days, less daylight and the cold. All this makes us a little more subdued, less cheerful and perhaps also a little gloomier. When looked at it like this, Christmas [stress](#) is thoroughly good for us because it galvanises us, gives us a purpose and creates anticipation."

Christmas is likewise overwhelmingly positive from a scientific point of view due to the cultural anchoring, its social components with family get-togethers and spending time together.

There is however no getting away from Christmas – it's everywhere with all the advantages and disadvantages that entails. "You cannot get away from the meaning Christmas has for the community. For many who celebrate Christmas this is beautiful. People, who do not celebrate Christmas, do tend to feel uncomfortable and a little excluded," says Blasche about aspects that may negatively affect in particular those people with another cultural or religious background.

**Tips for a successful Christmas** The enjoyment of Christmas time can be enhanced with some simple tips:

- A certain amount of stress is good in the run-up to Christmas and even increases the anticipation of Christmas.
- Do not build up too many expectations about Christmas.
- At Christmas everything does not have to be perfect, what is important is to be together, its inter-personal aspects are the most important.
- Presents are nice, but are not the most important thing by a long chalk.
- Take some time for yourself and don't just think about others.

Provided by Medical University of Vienna

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