



11 THINGS TO DO NOW TO GET READY FOR THE HOLIDAYS

However you feel about the contentious issue of when it's appropriate to start celebrating the holidays, we can all agree it's a busy time of year with a long "to-do" list that can leave you feeling less than jolly.

Bring the merry back to your holidays by checking some tasks off your list now. Here are 11 simple things you can do now to have more time to enjoy the holidays *whenever* you start celebrating

- 1 **Create a realistic Holiday Budget.** Include **all** gifts (family, friends, teachers, care providers, work exchanges, host gifts etc.) & incidental expenses (décor, cards, postage, gift wrap, charity, entertainment, holiday travel, gatherings you're hosting etc.). **TIP:** If possible, start putting aside some money weekly to cover holiday expenses. It may not cover everything but will help spread the costs out.
- 2 **Holiday Cards.** Photographers have already started booking these sessions, so call now! Whatever type of card you mail, get stamps & print your return address labels now too.
- 3 **Start Making Your Gift Shopping List.** Start brainstorming gift ideas & keep a running list.
- 4 **Inventory Your Gift Closet.** If you have a gift closet or drawer, go through it to see if you can already check some people off your list!
- 5 **Start Shopping.** Start now to avoid the busiest holiday shopping times and spread the expenses out. **TIP:** Keep a couple of small gifts on hand in case you receive an unexpected gift and want to reciprocate.
- 6 **Find Something To Keep ALL Holiday Receipts In.** It doesn't have to be fancy; an envelope in a drawer works great, just keep them all together to make it easier to find what you need for any returns.
- 7 **Stock Up On Baking Supplies.** Take an inventory of what you have & start purchasing holiday baking supplies. If you buy one or two a week now, you'll have a full pantry by the time you begin baking minus the big bump in your grocery bill!
- 8 **Stock Up On Wrapping Supplies.** Take stock of your wrapping supplies & make a list on your phone. When these items start appearing in stores (any day now), you'll know what you need and can knock this off your to-do list while running your usual errands.
- 9 **Pull out and test your holiday lights.** Test the lights and replace any that aren't working.
- 10 **Do A Toy Purge** Make room for new toys by decluttering toys that have been outgrown, are broken, missing pieces, or aren't played with. **TIP:** Check out [this](#) clever idea from **sunnydayfamily.com** to get kids involved AND excited about a toy purge! For general tips on decluttering toys with kids click [here](#).
- 11 **Start A List Of Holiday Activities & Events You Want To Do.** Prioritize the most important activities so you can get any supplies and plan your time accordingly.

To make all the planning and preparation even **easier**, I'm also sharing my free-printable holiday planner to organize all things holidays! Click [here](#) to get yours.