



ADHD uPLifted THE GIFT OF ADHD AND SURVIVING THE HOLIDAYS

By Cynthia North, Certified ADHD Life Coach

Living life easier is good for all of us, ADHD-minded or not. You do not have to have Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) to use what is shared here in the ADHD uPLifted Series to improve your quality of life. Do you want to find ways to work with your brainpower? Then you are in the right place. The ADHD uPLifted Series is a monthly publication written by me, Coach Cindy to offer you tested ways to lift up your chin and find your strengths from within. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder is a different ability in mastering life. Whether you are diagnosed with ADHD, think you have ADHD, or just need ways to live easier than this is the place for you. Inside you will find inspiration packed full of helpful tools, tips, strategies, and fast facts to try out. I hope you find this information value-added.

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FAST FACT

Sugar Rush



Americans average about 270 calories of sugar each day, that's about **17 teaspoons** a day, compared to the recommended limits of about 12 teaspoons per day or 200 calories. The cookies add up.

(Locke Hughes, 2017).

My Notes



Disclaimer:

The ADHD uPLifted Series is not provided to diagnose or treat Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. The information included in each ADHD uPLifted Series is offered with the intention of being value-added to the ADHD community and to those who are invested in brain health. This publication is created to start the conversation. This is not a sole source of available information nor intended to be considered so. I am not affiliated with any product suggested in this publication nor do I receive any compensation from the associated businesses or products. Please consult with your medical professionals only using this information as you see fit.



Your Hallmark Holiday

ADHD Focused

[By: Cynthia North, CALC](#)

The holidays are here! They arrived in the stores before Halloween prepping you in advance for what was coming. Your holiday season is supposed to play out like a Hallmark movie. Perfect love, perfect parents, perfect kids, perfect gift, solved dilemmas, snowflakes, and bliss. Sounds lovely, but is it just another "perfect" standard we try to live up to? For many affected by Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), the holidays exacerbate ADHD symptoms and trip up undesirable behaviors. Routines change, stimulation increases, and energy becomes uncontrollable. Impulse takes way. Tantrums unfold, tempers flare, energies surge, moods dip. Oh. But it's the holidays. So everyone should be on their very best behavior—threats from Santa. Elves watch on for who is being naughty or nice... will you get coal or candy? Sounding fun yet?

The foundations that help maintain brain balance are challenged during the holidays by excitement, stress, shifts in routine, diet changes, sleep alternations, and more. The holiday season is full of stimulation and temptations- your year-end bliss or a time you wish you could bunk down with the Grinch atop his mountaintop. Maybe your family celebrates with religious traditions or family gatherings, or perhaps you cave to the added sugar at the office or from the gift box in your mailbox- all struggle points for the ADHD brain.

December's ADHD uPLifted series is devoted to helping you and your family with tips on maintaining your pillars of health when expectations are high for the upcoming holiday season. You can have a hallmark holiday season by giving attention to self-discipline, with shared ways to support your roof for attainable goals using appropriate medication, nutrition, sleep, exercise, and cognitive support from a Therapist or ADHD Life Coach. Time is of short-supply so let's get started.

"YOU CAN EITHER SUFFER THE PAIN OF DISCIPLINE OR THE PAIN OF REGRET." -TIM ROHN



Self-discipline is the foundation of your house. Most likely for ADHDer's it is the hardest to maintain when dopamine levels are low. Practicing self-discipline and restraint is what helps you resist another cookie after having had two or self-restraint in not buying that sale item when you have already completed your holiday purchases.

Restraint and delayed gratification are extremely hard for the ADHD brain. Yes, it is tough to pass up a sweet treat and a BOGO deal for most people, but for the ADHD brain, the reward at the moment

outweighs the cost later. At the moment, the brain is only focused on reward- a cookie or getting that sale. The ADHD brain may not have the necessary executive functioning skills to use reasoning for future consequences. So what's one more cookie? Usually, it's more of a deep sigh later, "now my stomach hurts from eating all that." And guilt and shame set in. This full belly feeling comes long after the brain receives the glucose desired to ignite dopamine. It's a vicious cycle.

The holidays challenge self-discipline even more so for ADHDer's. The first step to support a strong foundation of self-discipline is to create a *holiday game plan* around struggle points. Strategies can be preplanned to follow in advance. One approach might be to talk with your partner about your *spending limit* and sticking to a budget. Some of my clients have found working from a cash envelope easier than using a credit card. Another option could be to buy prepaid gift cards to help create a spending cap. How can you make over-spending harder? Once the funds are gone, they are gone. When you stop to get more cash or add funds to a prepaid card, your brain has time to exercise restraint and reason. In essence, the key is to build in the opportunity to *pause* so the brain can think beyond the impulse. You could also try having a shopping partner to help you stick with your plan. Avoid eating the additional cookie by taking a lap around the table twice. Create a plan for when you want more? How can you delay your action? Having a solid foundation in self-discipline offers you the necessary support to raise the roof in setting your attainable goals. The key is to identify your struggle points and find a tool that works.

Building the appropriate structure to support your attainable goals with medication, nutrition, exercise, and sleep are all essential to setting your mind up to take in the benefits offered when working with a therapist or partnering with an ADHD Life Coach. So let's raise each pillar one by one, so you can have access to your holiday goals.



ADHD Survival Tip: Stick as close to your regular routine as possible.



I am not here to say yes or no to **medication**. Medication is something to be considered on an individual case-by-case basis with an ADHD specialized medical professional. You may or may not be a proponent or even require medication to manage your ADHD symptoms. Talking with a Psychiatrist specialized in ADHD may be necessary as you work with balancing the chemicals in your brain so strategies and tools can have the opportunity to take hold. Medication is meant to be value-added in subsiding ADHD symptoms without too many side effects. For some,

medication is a lifesaver. For others, medications do not work or cause too many intolerable side effects. The brain is a complicated organ, and not all medications are going to work for everyone.

It is important to mention that the holidays often shift a person’s regular schedule and habits. Medication is best taken at a specific time each day. Forgetting to take your medicine or taking it too early or way late can be problematic for your brain balance. Some people take “medication holidays” where they do not take their ADHD medication for a period of time. Not all medications can be started and stopped. A medication holiday should only be considered after consulting with your medical professional.

Common ADHD Medications:

STIMULANTS	NON-STIMULANTS	ALTERNATIVE TREATMENTS
Works 70-80% of the time Works immediately Increase levels of <u>dopamine</u> and <u>norepinephrine</u> (brain chemicals)	Works 20-30% of the time Works within a few days Various mechanisms	Limited data but some positive affects have been noted in certain age groups
<u>ex:</u> Methylphenidate, Dextroamphetamine, Dexmethylphenidate Brand names: <u>Vyvanse</u> , <u>Concerta</u> , Ritalin, Focalin, Adderall	<u>ex:</u> <u>Guanfacine</u> , Clonidine, <u>Atomoxetine</u> Brand names: <u>Intuniv</u> , <u>Kapvay</u> , Strattera	Omega-3 Fatty Acids (fish oil) found on salmon, tuna and trout or supplements (<u>good</u> sleep hygiene, well-balanced diet, daily physical activity should be part of any treatment plan)
		(<u>Quinn, 2021</u>)



Ways to Make Taking Your Medication Easier

- Use a **medication alarm**. The key to having success with an alarm is to use self-discipline to honor the alarm when it goes off by getting up and taking your medication without dismissing or snoozing it. I know it sounds like this should not require mentioning, but it's effortless to swipe left and believe you will remember later. ADHD brain wiring does not work that way without an added prompt again later. The point is to take medication at the same time every day.
- If you struggle with working memory, try using a **pill dispenser**. If you find yourself saying, "Hmmm, Did I take my meds? I can't remember," a pill dispenser could be an easy solution. It doesn't have to be like your grandparents' old style. There are new pill dispensers that have mirrors and other added features and come in different colors.
- Try **Pairing**- take your medicine at the same time you do a daily morning or evening habit.
- Know in advance when you need **medication refills**. Doctors may take time off around the holidays. The pharmacy may have holiday hours. Many ADHD medications are controlled substances and cannot be automatically refilled. What system could help you easily get your medication when you need it? Talk to your doctor about how to make medication refills easier. For example, your phone can become your friend—set reminders. Or use a sticky on the cabinet with a refill and pickup date.
- Mixing alcohol and medication can be very dangerous. In addition, many medicines have adverse side effects when paired with alcohol. So, what action can you take to help combat your urge to over-indulge at your company or family holiday party? Try creating a yummy **non-alcoholic drink** that could be just as fun to sip? There are a lot on new spirits on the market.



The key is to use less brainpower by finding ways to externalize meeting your medication needs. You are more likely to stick to your intentions when planning primes your brain for future decisions.



Nutrition is not so short and sweet during the holidays. Sugar has a dirty rap for complicating ADHD symptoms and is known to cause obesity. It is the most readily available dopamine-producing item within easy reach around the holidays. Some ADHDers are affected behaviorally more so than others. Regardless of how sugar affects behavior, too much added sugar can cause weight gain. “Both serotonin and dopamine levels rise when we eat high-carbohydrate and high-sugar food. It is possible that those with ADHD are gravitating to overeating as a biological means to raise certain

neurotransmitter levels.” (CHADD,2018) Avoiding increased sugar intake can be extremely hard. Eating one may lead to eating more. Some ADHDers suffer from binge eating. In fact, “About 30 percent of individuals with binge eating disorder also have a history of ADHD” (Haurin, 2018). Exposure to more treats is extremely challenging during the holidays. Other options to avoid increased sugar are:

Tips:

- Keep a **food diary**. Don’t expect yourself to remember. If you want to know what you are eating, write it down. Some apps can help track your intake. Warning: If you have Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD), tracking your food intake may become an obsession and lead to unhealthy habits. Consulting with a Nutritionist with knowledge of ADHD and OCD is highly advised when nutrition is a concern.
- How are you starting your day? For example, if you start with a bowl of sugary cereal and know you are going to the office cookie exchange, you might start your day with a **protein-rich breakfast** instead. Likely, a good choice holiday party or not.
- Keep a **healthy alternative** to the sweet treats that you will desire just as much (i.e., candied or chocolate covered almonds)
- **Do not skip meals**. You are more likely to over-eat if you go to the party hungry.
- Listen to your body? Do you feel hungry? I once heard a great question to gauge if you are eating for hunger or pleasure. Try asking yourself, “**Would I eat an apple right now?**” If the answer is yes, then you are feeling hunger.
- One and done or None-at-all. The brain doesn’t have to know what it is resisting if it hasn’t experienced it.
- **Avoid drinking** your calories. Many holiday beverages are loaded with calories. Take a peek at the label before indulging. Think ahead; maybe you can have a one-and-done policy. If so, how will you honor this choice?



"Sleep Deprivation is the most common brain impairment." -William C. Dement



The holidays can steal precious *sleep* hours. You may stay up late wrapping presents or shopping online sales. Or maybe you are committed to holiday party after holiday party. Sleep routines are easily pushed aside in the effort to fit more into your day. You may stay up late and sleep in, or maybe you are getting up earlier to get caught up. Regardless, your sleep becomes a sacrificed commodity. But, sleep is not a commodity like most of us treat it. Sleep is essential for your brain and body wellness. You or your ADHD child or spouse will not function with their ADHD

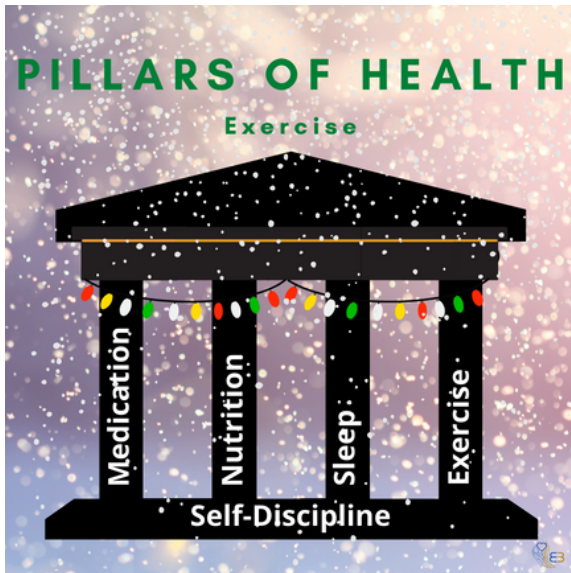
symptoms or behaviors well when sleep deprived. Sleep is a necessary bodily function to guard, like a mama bear with cubs. The first step is accepting the importance of sleep in your overall well-being. If your ADHD child is out of sorts, take a deep dive into their sleep habits. Many ADHDer's suffer from insomnia. Racing thoughts, restless leg, and an overall restless feeling can make falling asleep nearly impossible. Added stress makes this worse. So, how can you get your zzzs during the holidays? Know what you need; School-aged children between 9 and 11 hours. For teenagers, 8 to 10 hours is considered appropriate, 7 to 9 hours for young adults and adults, and 7 to 8 hours of sleep for older adults (Hirshkowitz et al., 2015).



Try this:

- Mind your sleep routine. Disrupting your sleep routine disrupts your natural **circadian rhythms** involved in your sleep patterns.
- Control the room **temperature**. (About 68 degrees)
- Maintain your **exercise** routine.
- **Brain dump** your thoughts on paper or in a voice recording right before bed.
- **Avoid alcohol**. Alcohol consumption directly affects your quality of sleep.
- Read more helpful sleep tips in the November issue of ADHD uPLifted.

“No matter how slow you go, you’re still lapping everybody on the couch.”
—Elite Daily



Exercise is often put on the back-burner over the holidays with the added pressures of to-do’s, colder outside temperatures, and shortened daylight. Calorie consumption increases with so many added treats available. People are not burning enough calories through exercise to offset the increased intake. Therefore the 10-pound gain becomes a holiday joke (McManus, 2019). Actually, you are more likely to gain about a pound over the holiday season and potentially carry that pound year to year. You can combat the 10-lb gain over ten years by:

- Increasing your exercise regimen so you can have the sweet treat you like.



- Find an exercise buddy to help you stay on track.

- Create a streak chart with a reward system.



- Make exercise your morning priority.



- Jump on a trampoline.

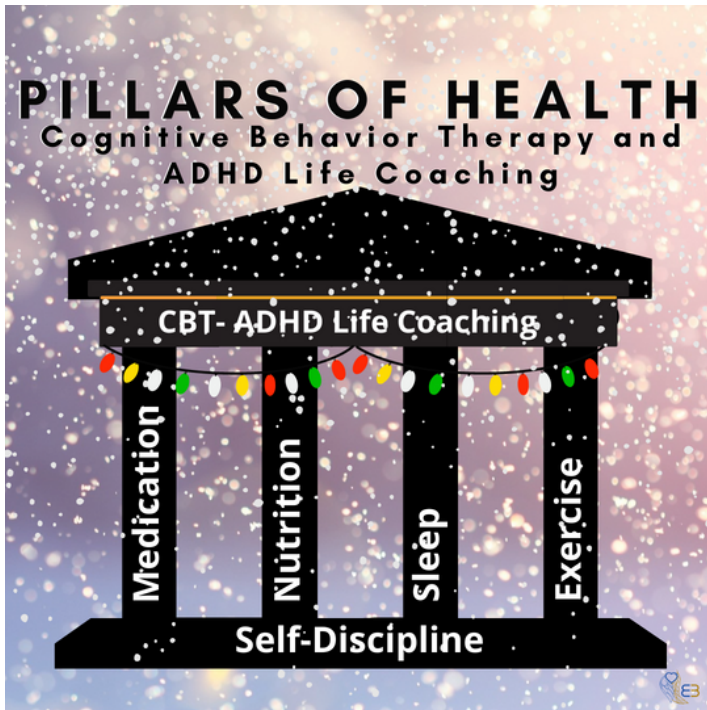
- Make exercise fun.

- Walk and talk, find an indoor walking track and invite a friend.

- Create a personal challenge and share it with a trusted friend.



“Ask for help. Not because you are weak. But because you want to remain strong.” – Les Brown



If you know you struggle at this time of year or that this time of year triggers your symptoms consider seeking *outside help*. Some needs require a trained professional to help you move the boulders out of the way. A licensed cognitive behavior therapist is trained to work through your past problem areas and focus on your deep emotional needs towards healing (Life Coach or Therapist: Who Should You See First?, 2016). A certified ADHD Life Coach is different than a Life Coach. A certified ADHD Life Coach can help you in the now to take steps towards your attainable goals for the future by increasing

your ADHD understanding and building skills specific to you to strengthen executive functioning deficits. A certified ADHD Life Coach is trained explicitly in ADHD (The Difference Between Regular Life Coaching and ADHD Coaching, 2021). Both professionals help you build strategies and tools to fit your needs. You are your “house” of wellness. The take-away from building your “house” for health and wellness is preplanning so you can employ self-discipline and restraint over the holidays. Planning offers you the option to know what action you could take.

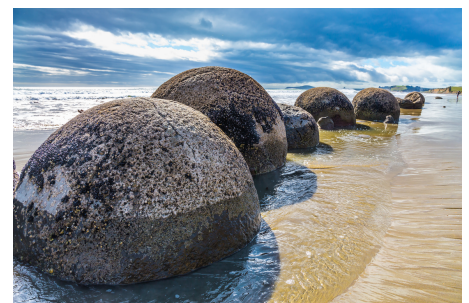
How to know what you need:

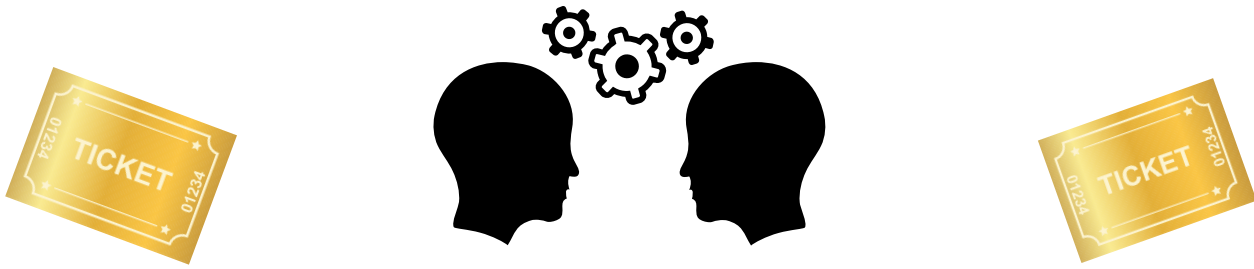


If your boulder is from your past, seeking cognitive behavioral therapy may be most beneficial.



If your boulders in your way now are preventing you from achieving your set attainable goals into the future, then seeking a partnership with a Certified ADHD Life Coach may be appropriate.





The added benefit from an outsider during the holidays may be your golden ticket to maintaining your overall wellness. The ability to have a hallmark holiday requires a strong foundation and sound pillars of support. You can find a licensed therapist specializing in ADHD in your area by google search or by recommendation. Many therapists are still offering telemedicine appointments, sliding scale payments and may accept health insurance. However, due to license restrictions, you can only work with a therapist licensed in your area.

Working with a certified ADHD Life Coach requires finding someone you connect with. I encourage my clients to interview several coaches before choosing who feels like the best fit for their needs. Most life coaching sessions are offered by phone or video call. Some coaches are offering session recordings and call transcripts to provide greater value from the coaching process. Securing a spot with an ADHD Life Coach often requires a down payment and a commitment over time. Future-focused work requires time and effort to actualize goals. On average, my clients work with me for a minimum of three months. If the holiday season pushes all of your challenge buttons, consider finding a professional to help. No matter where you are in the process, it is never too late to start on your “house” work.



Search for a Cognitive Behavioral Therapist

[Home - ABCT - Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies](#)
[Professional Directory - ADDA - Attention Deficit Disorder Association](#)

Search for an ADHD Coach

[CHADD Resource Directory - Find an ADHD professional](#)
[Professional Directory - ADDA - Attention Deficit Disorder Association](#)

"Word of mouth is the best way to find what you need, but this requires disclosure. Many organizations have search lists to find a good fit. Don't be afraid to interview each professional to know if they have the expertise in your area of need." CC



Self-regulation can be challenging at large gatherings with too much sensory input with blinking lights, loud music and excess energy.

Hint: Find a quiet area to get calm and recenter. Leave early with no apologies.



The holiday season can be joyous, memorable, and hallmark, or miserable and a tangled mess. ADHD does not have to become your demise during the holidays. Instead, you can use your ADHD super strengths to make the holidays even more enjoyable. Setting holiday expectations can be a slippery slope. As much as possible, involve the family in the holiday planning process. Work to **set attainable goals** for the holiday season for yourself and your family by asking these key questions. What will help you experience the holidays the way you envision them to be?

Create Your Holiday

- *Envision your family holiday, how would you make it a Hallmark Movie?*
- *What do you want most from this holiday season?*
- *What do you need to set you and your family up for success during the holidays?*
- *On July 4th, what do you want to remember from your holiday season?*
- *What pillars of health will you need to honor most to set yourself up for success?*
- *What do you need to preplan to reach your attainable goals during the holidays?*

ADHDers are the world's extraordinary creativities, gift idea generators, elaborate decorators, wild imaginers, beautifully spirited and energized elves. Tap into your strengths, and you will have the Hallmark Holiday you planned for with your foundation strong in self-discipline and your pillars of health intact. The magical spirit of the holiday's lives in all of us when ignited with joy. Choose joy. You are now better equipped with some tricks, tips and strategies to move the boulders that might get in the way during the holiday season. You are your house. Let your ADHD decorate it well. Where will your holiday joy take you this season?

"When my kids ask me what I want for Christmas, I always respond, "Peace. I want everyone to get along." My home is full of dysregulation over the holidays. The excitement takes over and strategies don't work as well. Our most guarded pillar is sleep." CC



*"Do what you can, with what you
have, where you are."
- Theodore Roosevelt*

Santa's Bag
Christmas Gift List & Budget
Clay Pot Software LLC

ADHD uPLifted App of the Month
Apple Store Ratings 4.5
Ages 4+
Free and Paid Ad Free \$4.99



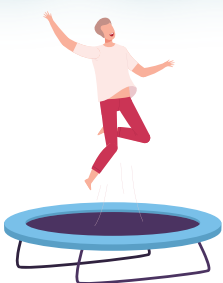
Revolutionize your Christmas shopping experience! Santa's Bag is a fun and easy-to-use app to help you manage your Christmas gift recipients, planning, shopping, and budgets. Each detail of the app is carefully designed to make sure you don't forget anyone or anything. Christmas shopping has never been easier or more fun! (Pot, 2010)



"My favorite aspect of this app is it reminds me where I have hidden my gifts from my peekers. In the past, I have been known to be so good at it that I hide it from myself. Not with Santa's Bag." CC

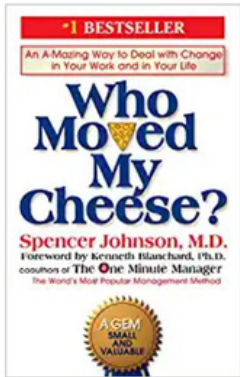
DID YOU KNOW- EXERCISE

"My son asked for a mini trampoline for his birthday. Movement makes his brain work." CC



Fifteen minutes of trampoline jumping burns more calories than forty minutes of jogging and provides our bodies with an excessive work out. (AAJoyLand, 2019)

READERS Corner



Who Moved My Cheese Hardcover –
September 8, 1998
by Spencer Johnson (Author), Kenneth Blanchard
(Foreword)
4.6 out of 5 stars 12,631 ratings



The number one international best seller!
A timeless business classic, Who Moved My Cheese? uses a simple parable to reveal profound truths about dealing with change so that you can enjoy less stress and more success in your work and in your life.

It would be all so easy if you had a map to the Maze.
If the same old routines worked.
If they'd just stop moving "The Cheese."
But things keep changing...

*"When you move beyond fear you feel free."
A powerful thought sat in me. I find imagery
to be even more powerful. "Change can lead
to something better..." I agree." CC*



Most people are fearful of change, both personal and professional because they don't have any control over how or when it happens to them. Since change happens either to the individual or by the individual, Dr. Spencer Johnson uses a deceptively simple story to show that when it comes to living in a rapidly changing world, what matters most is your attitude. Exploring a simple way to take the fear and anxiety out of managing the future, Who Moved My Cheese? can help you discover how to anticipate, acknowledge, and accept change in order to have a positive impact on your job, your relationships, and every aspect of your life.

(Amazon.com: Who Moved My Cheese?: An A-Mazing Way to Deal with Change in Your Work and in Your Life (Audible Audio Edition): Spencer Johnson, Kenneth Blanchard, Tony Roberts, Karen Ziemba, Penguin Audio: Audible Books & Originals, 2021)

6. LISTENING TO NOW

*"Mantra's really help me! I often use the,
"let me check my calendar" to delay
commitments.*



Prioritizing Your Needs For a Better
Holiday Season
Runtime: 7 minutes



This episode, brought to you by Hacking Your ADHD, provides several great tips for managing the added challenges of the holiday season. One thing most everyone has in common is there is a lot more to do at this time of year. Included: 5 tips to manage the holiday season. (Curb, 2019)

BAKED SNACK

allrecipes


Candied Almonds

★★★★★

This is a favorite with my father. They taste so good warm! Substitute any type of nuts you prefer.

By Darla K

Prep: 5 mins
Cook: 15 mins
Additional: 15 mins
Total: 35 mins
Servings: 8
Yield: 2 cups



Ingredients

- ½ cup water
- 1 cup white sugar
- 1 tablespoon ground cinnamon
- 2 cups whole almonds

Directions

Step 1

Combine the water, sugar, and cinnamon in a saucepan over medium heat; bring to a boil; add the almonds. Cook and stir the mixture until the liquid evaporates and leaves a syrup-like coating on the almonds. Pour the almonds onto a baking sheet lined with waxed paper. Separate almonds using forks. Allow to cool about 15 minutes.

Nutrition Facts

Per Serving: 304 calories; protein 7.6g; carbohydrates 32.7g; fat 18g; sodium 0.9mg.

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Candied Almonds Servings Per Recipe: 8 Calories: 304.1

% Daily Value * Protein: 7.6g (15 %), Carbohydrates: 32.7g (11 %), Dietary Fiber: 4.6g (19 %), Sugars: 26.7g
 Fat: 18g (28 %), Saturated Fat: 1.4g (7 %), Vitamin A Iu: 6.1IU Niacin Equivalents: 2.5mg (19 %) Folate:
 10.3mcg (3 %), Calcium: 97.4mg (10 %), Iron: 1.6mg (9 %), Magnesium: 98.3mg (35 %) Potassium:
 262.8mg (7 %), Sodium: 0.9mg, Thiamin: 0.1mg (9 %), Calories From Fat: 161.9

(K, 2020)

CHRISTMAS PUNCH

Ingredients

- 6 cups cranberry juice or pomegranate cranberry juice*
- 3 cups pineapple juice
- 1 Tbsp almond extract
- 3 liters ginger ale
- 1 (12 oz.) bag fresh cranberries (optional)
- 2 fresh limes, sliced (optional)
- Ice

Instructions

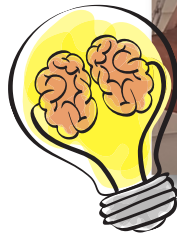
Pour cranberry juice, pineapple juice, and almond extract into a large drink dispenser and mix. Pour in ginger ale and give it one quick stir.

Add in cranberries, ice and ginger ale. Serve within a few hours for best results as it will start to go flat.

Nutrition Facts	
Christmas Punch	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories	151
	% Daily Value*
Sodium 20mg	1%
Potassium 173mg	5%
Carbohydrates 37g	12%
Sugar 34g	38%
Vitamin C 6mg	7%
Calcium 21mg	2%
Iron 0.7mg	4%

* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2000 calorie diet.

(Christmas Punch - Cooking Classy, 2020)



About Coach Cindy

Thank you for joining me. My name is Cynthia North, but people know me as Cindy. I am a Certified ADHD Life Coach devoted to partnering with clients to create self-success within ADHD and living life. I work with all ages having a special interest in how the brain affects the outcome. I help ADHDer's move from crippled in doubt to capable with clarity. I have expanded to offer personalized Mental Fitness Coaching through Shirzad Chamine's Positive Intelligence Program. New possibilities bloom with deeper self-awareness and through the strength in your mental fitness. I have an innate desire to empower others no matter what difficulties they face.

ADHD has touched me personally and professionally.

I know first-hand how ADHD symptoms and its' behavior can wreak havoc on family dynamics. I chose to become a trained ADHD Life Coach because I want others to discover the greatness within ADHD strengths while working with their executive functioning challenges. I am where I am today because of my two dynamic ADHD children. They both teach me and open my mind to more each day. Their needs were beyond a hug, discipline, structure, or praise. So I sought professional help, ultimately finding a trained ADHD Life Coach. And here I am.

Life experiences have made way for opportunity. I am on a journey to slay stigmas surrounding brain differences. Finding a Life Coach to empower my child led me to become a trained ADHD Life Coach myself to serve others past their stuck ways and ADHD stigmas. Choosing to strengthen your inner-self is where Empower Me starts. The work is an inside job where your "me" begins. Connecting your heart and brain with a Coach creates empowerment opportunities.

EmpowerM3 - is where the 3 connect to take flight.



There is a more extraordinary tomorrow when the discovery starts today.

Resources

Fast Fact

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