



### Agitation to Relaxation

Sure, the holidays can be fun... but most of us inevitably get stressed out as well, likely over finances, relationships, and simple physical exhaustion. The following relaxation techniques can have a positive impact on your mind, body, and soul:

- **Meditate, meditate, meditate.** This concept may invoke mental images of flowing robes and incense, but all meditation really consists of is sitting quietly for 10-15 minutes with a completely clear mind. Try it!
- **Get a massage!** If you cannot afford a professional, ask a close friend or loved one to rub your shoulders a few times, which can work wonders.
- Make sure to take time out of your day to **stretch your muscles**, especially after sitting or standing for some time.
- When you start to feel stressed, just stop what you are doing and **breathe**. This can be done in any place at any time. Simply take a few minutes and inhale deeply, then exhale.

### Bad Kitty!

Ahh... that sparkling Christmas tree is such a treat to the eye. However, it's not just mesmerizing to you – it's thrilling for your pet(s) as well! Follow these tips to ensure both your tree and

your animals make it through the holidays in one piece!

- If you have a live Christmas tree, make sure to cover the water pot with a tree skirt. The liquid can make your pet sick because it may contain sap or other secretions.
- Cats are fascinated with low-hanging, dangling ornaments. You may want to leave the bottom third of your tree undecorated. Or, try hanging lightweight cat and dog toys from the bottom branches.
- Avoid using loose tinsel; animals can choke on the strands.
- Keep presents with dangling or long ribbons out of reach.
- Tape the cords from the lighting to the wall so your pets will not chew them.



### Other holiday tips to remember:

- Lit candles are fascinating for animals (and small children as well!). Never leave candles unattended.
- Chocolate can be fatal to dogs, and is not healthy for cats either... so ensure there is no way for them to accidentally ingest any.
- Mistletoe and holly are toxic to your animals. Ensure these are placed in unreachable areas.



## Snack Your Way to Health!

Yes... it IS possible! According to Forbes.com, 19% of all food consumed in America is considered a snack food. However, that is not necessarily a bad thing. The research firm NPD Group conducted a study which showed that 51% of all Americans consistently snack on foods considered "healthy," which is up from 44% in 2004. The products considered the best choices for the average American snacker are the popular 100-calorie "snack packs." This is because the portions are already measured out, preventing overindulgence while satisfying the stomach.

As snacking continues to surge in popularity, food manufacturers are producing such products as organic dried fruit and vegetable snacks, 50-calorie portion-control beef jerky (a great source of protein), and cereal bars that contain the U.S. Department of Agriculture's entire recommended daily allowance of fruits and vegetables. So, what are you waiting for? Snack on!

## Did You Know...?



According to a recent study done by the Securities Industry and Financial Markets Association of New York and Washington:

- 19% of people are apprehensive about retirement.
- 6% are panicked.
- 5% feel clueless about what to do.

However, those who had previously met with a financial adviser were significantly more at ease – 78% announced feeling "comfortable" or even "confident." Where do you fall? Many Americans are unsettled and confused about the current economy. If you feel your worries about retirement have increased, it may be in your best interest to contact a financial adviser who can put matters in perspective. Or, visit [www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org) and type in "Retirement Calculator." This handy tool helps you find out how much you need to retire comfortably.

*In the spirit of healthy snacking, why not serve this appetizer at your holiday party? It's sure to be a hit – especially when you tell your guests how heart-friendly it is!*

### Parmesan Pitas

6 whole wheat pita bread pockets (6" size)  
2 teaspoons olive oil  
4 green onions, minced  
Minced garlic (at least 1 clove)  
½ cup fresh parsley, chopped  
2 teaspoons dried basil  
1 teaspoon dried rosemary  
4 tablespoons Parmesan cheese

Preheat oven to 350°F and pull each pita apart so there are 2 layers. In a bowl, stir together the remaining ingredients minus the Parmesan and spread on pitas. Use olive oil spray to mist the tops of the pitas and sprinkle with the Parmesan. Cut each half into 6 slices, and place on an ungreased baking sheet. Bake for 10-12 minutes or until crispy; serve warm. Serves 36. 2 slices per serving; 33 calories per serving, 1g protein, 6g carbohydrates, 1g fiber, 1mg cholesterol.

**Health and Wellness tips for your work, home and life – brought to you by the insurance and healthcare specialists at Corporate Health Systems, Inc. Happy holidays!**