



GENERAL ACUPUNCTURE

Holiday Shopping Shouldn't Be Painful (But It Can Be)

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Most of my friends and patients know that I am a Christmas junkie. I love Christmas. I divide the year into two halves — the bleak six months after Christmas, ending June 25th, and the six months leading up to Christmas. June 25th is the "Christmas equinox" in my book, and that is when I actively start to plan for the holidays.

I have the privilege of being Santa for the local Christmas parade, as well as showing up for kids at the police hall on Thanksgiving and at several venues around the area through the month. My staff often joins me as my helper elves and we have a great time. It's good fun, and it's good community relations.

However, not everyone is into the Christmas season the way I am. Many are stressed and anxious with the holidays for any number of reasons — personal beliefs, bad memories, loneliness, angst. But one of the big issues is the stress of going shopping. As the most frantic consumer season of the year draws near, with its virtually unavoidable physical exhaustion, specialists encourage shoppers to treat their tasks as an athletic event, and with preparation.



In going through my files recently, I came across this reminder page I made up for my patients many years ago. I am sharing it with you now as an early Christmas present. Nothing fancy or extreme, but some good common-sense reminders to take care of yourself. The American Chiropractic Association advises that, before consumers head out at 6 a.m. to that department store sale, they should be mindful of some preventive measures:

- Drink water frequently throughout the day to keep your muscles and body hydrated.
- Stretch before and after a long day of shopping.
- Wear shoes with plenty of cushioning in the soles to absorb the impact of walking on hard shopping mall floors.
- Choose clothing that is as comfortable as possible.
- The day's errands may entail going from a cold environment (outdoors) to a warm environment (indoors), so it's a good idea to wear layers.
- Leave purses at home. Wear a fanny pack or a light backpack instead, and pack only the absolute essentials (driver's license, credit card, etc.).
- Plan frequent breaks, at least once every 45 minutes for most people.
- When taking breaks, eat light foods. A salad and fruit will retain more spring in the step, than a burger and fries.
- Skip the coffee break. Coffee contains caffeine, which has a dehydrating effect and adds even more stress to the body.
- If possible, obtain a locker and drop packages there during breaks. Don't carry around more than is absolutely necessary at one time. If the mall or shopping center doesn't offer lockers, plan frequent trips to the car. Remember to store them in the trunk or otherwise out of sight, if possible.
- Don't forget to take care of you. Make sure to see your acupuncturist for a well-deserved rest and treatment.

Make sure your channels are open and clear so you are ready to go and enjoy all that the holidays have to offer!

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