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How to have a Productive Christmas

For many people Christmas can be a very stressful time of year. With so much going on, it's often easy to forget that Christmas is supposed to be a celebration and great time of year. But if you stick to a few simple rules you'll find yourself having a stress-free and productive holiday season.

Have a Plan

Nothing is worse than trying to store gift, food ideas and Christmas card lists in your head. Get all of this information down on paper, where it won't be forgotten.

Once this all down and out of your head, come up with a plan on what's going to happen and when. When do you want write Christmas cards by? When are you going shopping and where?

I like to use a blank printed calendar that I can scribble all over and get a good overview of what's coming up. I then transfer these dates into the reminder tool Task.fm (www.task.fm) which will send me an sms when I need to complete a task.

Start Early

I shop for Christmas gifts throughout the year. In my mind, there is nothing worse than trying to do Christmas shopping all at the last minute. Most of my shopping is done online in the comfort of an armchair. If I come across a possible gift idea while browsing the internet, I bookmark it so I can come back later.

I use Delicious (www.delicious.com) for bookmarks, as I can tag possible ideas with a "gift" tag or "mums gift" for easy reference.

If you shop online not only will you avoid the queues and stress of shopping but it can often be a lot cheaper. Make sure you shop around online for the best price.

Disconnect

Spend Christmas away from email and social networking sites. Setup a Christmas auto-reply (can easily be done in gmail and most email clients) that lets people know you will be checking emails less often over the holiday season.

People won't get annoyed as this is an expected practice.

Just Relax

Don't worry about being too productive or organised. At the end of the day, Christmas is a time to spend with family and friends and not your endless to-do list.