

FlyLady's Holiday Control Journal

Your Guide to Cruising Through the Holidays



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Let's Play A Little Game with Ourselves

We are going to pretend that on December 1st we are going on a 3 week cruise. In order to have a peaceful cruise we need to take care of things so that we are not running around like a chicken with its head cut off with only a few days till the big day!

Here is our plan of action; by December we will have most of our holiday preparations finished. This means presents purchased and wrapped, decorations ready to be put up, travel arrangements made and food in the house ready to cook. Well most of it anyway. You will still need to purchase fresh produce.

This is going to be the first year that you will not be feeling like the holidays are too big a hassle. The last few years you have looked like our frazzled Franny on your website. This year, you may actually enjoy yourself and your family is going to love the peaceful holiday spirit that has hugged your home.

This is your Holiday Control Journal. Along with this, I will be sending out daily Holiday Cruising Missions to help you accomplish your BabySteps for preparing for any special occasion. Please sign up for our emails or check our website each day starting the third week in October: www.FlyLady.net

You can do anything for 15 minutes; even get ready for a holiday celebration!

Are you ready to FLY?

FlyLady

Get the House Ready To Cruise Through the Holidays

If your home is suffering from CHAOS (Can't Have Anyone Over Syndrome) then in order to Cruise Through The Holidays we are going to have to get your home ready to greet your guests and keep it from overwhelming you. This is not a recipe for Stash and Dash!

Here is how we do this!

Crisis Cleaning 101

This is surface cleaning; your guests are not going to be looking in your closets. If they do, then tell them you are taking BabySteps and your home did not get dirty in a day and it is not going to get clean overnight. This will get the main areas of your home presentable. We are not looking for perfection; just progress.

1. Get out your timer; it is the key to not crashing and burning.
2. Set your timer for 15 minutes and go to the kitchen; start putting away dishes, washing a few and throwing out the trash. When your timer goes off; Stop working in the kitchen. I know it is not finished but this is important.
3. Set your timer again for 15 minutes; this time we are spending those 15 minutes in the living room. Start with your Hot Spots; clean off coffee tables, pick up the stuff on the floor, and throw away the trash. When the timer goes off; Stop!
4. Set your timer for another 15 minutes; we are concentrating on the main bathroom that guests use. I want you to do the same thing in this little room; throw out the trash, put things away in the cabinets and place the dirty clothes and towels in the laundry room. When the timer goes off; you know the routine; STOP!
5. Now here is the most important 15 minutes session of our Crisis Cleaning 101: Sit down, get a cup of water or your favorite beverage and rest for 15 minutes. Yes you heard me right. Resting will keep you from crashing and burning. After you sit for these few minutes; you can start in the kitchen again. Only do 15 minutes at a time in each room.

Please take care of yourself; follow these directions so you will not Crash and Burn. I want you to enjoy the holidays, not dread them!

How to Enjoy Your Holiday Cruise While your home cleans itself!

We all know how to clean! Let's face it; we had the best teachers in the world: Our parents! The problem is that we have never been taught how to maintain a home so that it practically cleans itself. This is quite simple! All it takes is a basic routine for the morning, afternoon and before bed.

I want to tell you a little story about myself. Four years ago, I was preparing for our Thanksgiving Dinner. Now this was my first Thanksgiving Dinner as Robert's wife with his family. I was scared to death. I knew that I had a lot of cooking to do and that I would not have time to clean if I waited till the last day. So I decided to ask a friend to come and help me straighten up so I would not have to worry about how the house looked. That was a whole week before our family would arrive. After we got the house clean then it hit me that it had never stayed clean more than a day in the past and if I didn't find some answers then I was going to be cleaning and cooking at the same time and that would spell disaster for my Sidetracked mentality and my ability to be a good hostess.

This is when I got the brilliant idea to ask a born organized person how she keeps her home nice and neat. So I asked my clerk to the Board of Commissioners. She told me in her sweet but born organized way, "Marla, you just have to pick up after yourself!"

As the kids say, WELL DUH! This was one of my light bulb moments. The reason my house won't stay clean long is that I let things pile up by not putting things back where I got them from.

That day I became aware of my tendency to not put things away. I had lots of reasons; it was an on-going project or this was a convenient spot to keep this. So I put a stop to those attitudes and started putting things away when I finished. I even put things away when I wasn't finished, but no longer had time to work on it. Imagine that, putting something away to work on at a later time. This was a foreign concept for me. I was unable to see my clutter for what it really was; Clutter and not a continuing project. I could always see Robert's clutter, but I was blind to my own.

The secret to helping this work for you is to quit trying to multi-task. We pride ourselves on being able to do two things at once, but the truth of the matter is

that something always gets left undone. So you have all of these unfinished projects all around your home piling guilt on your head.

Once you have *Crisis Cleaned* and have gotten your home presentable; your simple routines will put your home on automatic pilot. Use your timer to attack your Hot Spots and continue to declutter your home. It is much easier to maintain your home with less stuff than it is to try to organize your clutter. Spend 15 minutes a day tossing out the trash and giving away things you don't love or use. Start Now! Don't wait till a week before your holiday celebration.

I want you to enjoy your company and not be worn out from cleaning half the night and then having to get up and cook. With the stress of the house lifted you will be able to *Cruise Through The Holidays* without yelling at your babies or your sweetie!

Before Bed Routine: Start as soon as dinner is finished don't wait till 10:00pm.

1. Shine your sink; go to bed with a clean kitchen.
2. Put things away from your Hot Spots.
3. Lay out your clothes for tomorrow; check your calendar for appointments.
4. Take some time to relax; bubble bath, good book or magazine.
5. Go to bed at a decent hour.

Morning Routine: Start as soon as your feet hit the floor.

1. Make your bed.
2. Get dressed to lace up shoes.
3. Put a load of laundry in the washer.
4. Empty dishwasher.
5. Eat breakfast, drink your water, take your vitamins.
6. Check your calendar for appointments.
7. Think about what's for dinner.
8. Police your Hot Spots and put things away.
9. Set a timer and declutter one little area for 15 minutes.
10. Where is your laundry? Put it in the dryer.
11. Take a break and rest while you check your Holiday Control Journal.

Afternoon Routine: Start as soon as you get home from work.

1. Start dinner, put hot soapy water in your sink, and clean up as you cook.
2. Fold and put laundry away.
3. Set the table.
4. Enjoy dinner.

Holiday Traditions

Adapt to fit your family!

Every family has its own way of celebrating the holidays. When two people come together to create a new family then the customs and traditions for celebrations also have to be blended. The stress of the holiday can be compounded when decisions are not mutually agreed upon before the holiday arrives. I am not just talking about religious customs but things that are as simple as how to wrap a gift or to what to cook for the holiday dinner. In some cases feelings get hurt because the celebration doesn't have the same experience as when you were a child.

Well guess what friends; we are adults and we can sit down and come to a compromise. We don't have to celebrate like our mothers did. We can pick and choose what is important to us and toss out what doesn't work for our families.

Gather your family around the dinner table for a discussion of what is their favorite part of the holiday season. Make a list and incorporate these items into your Holiday Cruise. You will be much happier and so will your family. It all comes from listening and loving each other. Don't assume that you already know; you may be surprised by their comments.

As I was talking with a friend while writing this essay she told me, "We do the holidays, we don't buy them!" Isn't that a wonderful way to feel about celebrating with your family?

Always remember that memories you create with your traditions are reflected in all of your senses: Sight, sound, feel, taste and smell. I will never forget one Christmas Eve when we were having trouble going to sleep and daddy told us that we had better be quiet because Santa would not stop if he heard us giggling. Not long after that we heard the sound of sleigh bells. Imagine that; my Daddy taking the time to slip outside with bells in hand to give his babies a memory. If you have a close neighborhood then the families could come up with a collective bedtime and one dad or mom could sneak through the yards with sleigh bells in hand, ringing them under certain bedroom windows. Be sure to have on your shoes and permission.

There are lots of fun things you can do with your young children to set the stage for Santa. Keep in mind if you are rushing around trying to get ready for the big day then you are going to miss out on all the fun.

The Day before the Holiday

1. Create an activity that will tire the babies out on the Christmas Eve. If you live in a snowy area then build snowmen and have a neighborhood contest for the most creative snowman.
2. If you don't live in a snowy region, rake leaves or wad up newspaper and put them in white bags and build pretend snowmen. You are very creative people.
3. In the past people would go cut their tree on Christmas Eve and spend the evening decorating it with strings of popcorn and paper chains. This would take up a lot of time. Don't let your perfectionism get in the way of letting your babies be creative too.
4. Don't forget our little feathered and furry friends; decorate a tree in the yard for the critters; with peanuts, birdseed ornaments, and pieces of fruit.

Several weeks ahead of time:

5. Have the children design their own wrapping paper for the family out of sheets of blank newsprint. Give them your stamps, ink pads, markers, pens and just let them have some fun. Don't be ashamed to use them for wrapping the assorted gifts that you do purchase. The receiver will love the drawings.
6. Every home needs a house stocking. I can hear you now what is a house stocking or as my friend calls it a house sock. Many years ago my friend received a huge Stocking for her new family. It was too big for just one person so they decided that all gifts that were for the whole family would be put in this sock. This really does save disappointment when someone in the family decides to give mommy a new kitchen sink or toilet as a gift. So give it to the house instead. Isn't this a wonderful idea? You can also put family vacations in the sock.
7. Have you ever noticed that Mommy's stocking is kind of bare? Why not take a few minutes to fill your own stocking or better yet trade stockings with a dear friend that gets left out on Christmas morning too. Won't it be fun to pour out your stocking while everyone else is enjoying the morning! Michele does this every year with her friend; it has become their tradition.
8. Fill your home with holiday music: Everything from silly songs like the Chipmunks to more traditional songs from Classical music.

9. Remember the smells of the holidays. Don't fake them; bake them. That takes care of two of the senses, plus a little clutter free gift to bless someone with. Come up with simple recipes and get the ingredients in the house. That is half the battle. Just think you are turning something that you didn't have time to do into a memory without the stress; all because you are Cruising through the holidays. Check out our website for the fun cookie recipes from our members. www.FlyLady.net

10. If you have scheduling conflicts don't try to over-extend yourself and your family. You can have your celebration any time you choose. In fact this makes the holiday last much longer. This year my son's family and our family will be doing our holiday dinner between Christmas and New Years; Take care of yourself! Let go of your perfectionism and just pick a day and declare this your day to celebrate.

11. One night as the big day gets closer; put the children to bed. Then make some popcorn and hot chocolate, put it in the car. Just as the babies nod off, grab them up and put them in the car and ride around singing carols and looking at all the holiday lights and displays. You may need to do this on a Friday night as to not make for cranky babes the next day. We have fun looking for the most beautiful and the tackiest displays.

The Big Day has arrived:

12. Leave little signs that Santa has really been there. One way is big boots footprints from the door or fireplace made with carpet cleaning powder or baking soda. Arrange toys as if they were waving goodbye to Santa as he shimmied up the chimney. Did you know that reindeers really make a mess when they get into the refrigerator and munch of carrots and celery? Do this by half chewing up a part of a carrot and leaving it on the floor. The babies will just have a fit. One dad slid his skis out an upstairs window to look as if the sleigh had been there. This only works if you have a partial roof outside of a window. Don't try to climb a snowy roof in the middle of the night.

The idea here is to have fun. These are some simple creative things to do that cost very little but create memories. Are your ready Cruise through the holidays and enjoy this year without feeling stressed out?

List Your Family Traditions Here:

FOOD:

Decorations:

Things To Do:

New Traditions You May Like To Add This Year:

Things That Your Family Doesn't Like To Do: It is better to know now and be able to discuss it than to suffer and everyone be miserable.

Holiday Menu for Main Meal

Fix your family favorites; this is not the time to experiment on them!

In the margin put the cookbook name and page number. On the next page list the ingredients on your shopping list. Mark them off as you have pre-purchased these items. If you are like me, you always cook too much anyway!

Meat _____

Salads _____

Side Dishes _____

Bread _____

Desserts _____

Beverages _____

Holiday Breakfast

Keep it simple and something you can make ahead

Entrée _____

Side dish _____

Fruit _____

Juice _____

Beverages _____

Holiday Party Food

Heavy Hors d'oeuvres

Meat Appetizers _____

Cheese Appetizers _____

Dips _____

Veggie Appetizers _____

Fruit Appetizers _____

Cookies _____

Candies _____

Cakes _____

Beverages _____

Favorite Holiday Recipe Cards

Tape or Write your recipes on this sheet. Make photocopies of your recipes; if you want to keep this. Put it in a sheet protector so it won't get messed up while you are using it. Use extra sheets if you need to; in order to keep all your favorite holiday recipes in one spot! Make out your shopping list as you go. Spend 15 minutes at a time. Do not crash and burn!

Let's Bake Some Holiday Cookies

When December finally gets here you are going to be so surprised that you are not stressed out. In fact you will have the time to bake those cookies you have always told the children you would. Now with all the presents purchased, wrapped and the halls decked; you have no more excuses. Get out your chef's hat, holiday apron and let's have some fun in the kitchen. Your routines will keep the kitchen clean and free you up to make some memories with your babies. In order to be spontaneous about this; you will need to have the necessary ingredients in your pantry and refrigerator.

We all have our traditional holiday favorites, so get out those recipes and write them down here and list your ingredients on your shopping list. Buy extra flour and sugar each time you go shopping. To bake cookies you need flour, sugar, butter and eggs for the most part. We always have some tried and true recipes on our website, so if you need some help with this; go check out www.FlyLady.net .

Many of you like to give baked goods as gifts. Get out those recipes too and start your shopping list. Pick up these items long before you will need them so that they are available when the urge to bake hits you. I promise you will have free time to play this holiday season if you will start now thinking about this. After all you can do anything for 15 minutes; even put together some cookie dough. When you have everything you need it is much more fun to cook! And when the kitchen is clean all you have to do is clean up as you go. Don't forget to start with a sink full of hot soapy dishwater.

Are you ready to FLY?

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Favorite Cookie Recipes

Tape or write in here

Other Recipes For Baked Gifts

Baking Ingredients Shopping List

Mark items off as you pre-buy them. A well stocked pantry is the key to spontaneity.
Build your shopping list from your recipes.

What kind of flour do you need for each recipe and how much?

What kind of sugar?

How much butter?

How many eggs?

What are you going to need to decorate them with?

What do you need to package them with?

What other items do you need in order to bake your holiday goodies: Baking powder, baking soda, jams, chocolate chips, nuts, etc?

Are You Traveling This Season?

Put these dates on your Calendar

What date are you leaving? _____

How long will you be gone? _____

What date will you return home? _____

Are you driving? _____

Is the car serviced? _____

If you are not going by car; do you need to purchase plane tickets? Make your arrangements as soon as you know your dates? Put all your information about your tickets in this folder.

Who is taking care of the pets? Book a kennel if you need too!

Packing List: for the ___ number of days you will be gone

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Outfits For ___ Days | <input type="checkbox"/> Sports Equipment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Toiletries | <input type="checkbox"/> Cell Phone & Charger |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Coat, Hat, Scarves, Gloves | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Under Clothes | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Socks | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shoes | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dressy Clothes: Church Or Party | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tickets | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gifts | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Traveling Money, Purse | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Maps | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Snacks For The Trip | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

Time To Decorate

Keep it simple and use your favorite things (it all doesn't need to be displayed).
Have fun and take your time; 15 minutes a day will make decorating a piece of cake.

Zone 1: Entrance, Front Porch, Dining Room

- Wreath For Front Door
- Center Piece For Your Dining Table
- Lights For Your Picture Window Or Porch
- Outside Lights
- Electric Candles For Front Windows
- _____
- _____

Zone 2: Kitchen

- Wreath For Back Door
- Center Piece For Your Table
- Holiday Dish Towels
- _____
- _____

Zone 3: Main Bathroom

- Holiday Towels
- _____
- _____

Zone 4: Master Bedroom

- Holiday Candles
- Flannel Sheets
- _____

Zone 5: Living Room

- Center Piece For Your Coffee Table
- Lights For Your Tree
- Tree
- Ornaments, Tinsel, Tree Topper
- Mantle Decorations
- Snow Village
- _____

Catalog Orders Checklist

As you place an order write it down here: Then mark it off as it comes in. I know this seems redundant with the other chart to keep up with your orders, but use it as you place the orders. Put a deadline on yourself to place all orders by December 1st. This way you will not have to pay extra for fast shipping

#	Company	Item/Who	Order Date	Received
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
14				
15				
16				
17				
18				
19				
20				
21				

Dates to Put On Your Calendar

Shipping Deadlines: Mail early!

Packages shipped overseas _____

Greeting Cards mailed _____

Packages shipped in your country _____

Departure Dates: if you are traveling _____

Arrival Dates: if people are visiting you _____

Party Dates _____

School Functions _____

Church Functions _____

Dinner Dates with friends _____

Office Functions _____

Volunteer Functions _____

Deadlines for Homemade Gifts _____

Other _____

Review this list each week to make sure you are meeting your deadlines and to keep yourself from procrastinating.

You can do anything for 15 minutes; even break your deadlines into BabySteps. - FlyLady

All Aboard: It's Time To Cruise through the Holidays!

Dear Friends,

I know that you have just read this whole Holiday Control Journal cover to cover to just see if I have any clue how to keep you from being stressed out during this time of year. Well all I can say is that your stress will not leave unless you take 15 minutes a day to fill in these pages and get into project mode. A little planning now and a little time each day doing will keep you from procrastinating till the last minute. This is what is going to help you have a peaceful cruise through the holidays.

With the stress gone you can finally do all the wonderful things that you have felt guilty about because you didn't have time. For the first time ever you may actually enjoy the holidays instead of dreading them.

Our Cruise date is December 1st, so put your plans into actions and get ready to enjoy the month of December; baking cookies, decorating without being overwhelmed, attending parties and not over spending for gifts.

Are you ready to Cruise through the holidays?

FlyLady

Tape an envelope to this page to hold your receipts; just in case you need them later. This will also help you keep up with your spending.