

12 DAYS OF HOLIDAY SANITY FOR DADS



Hey Dads,

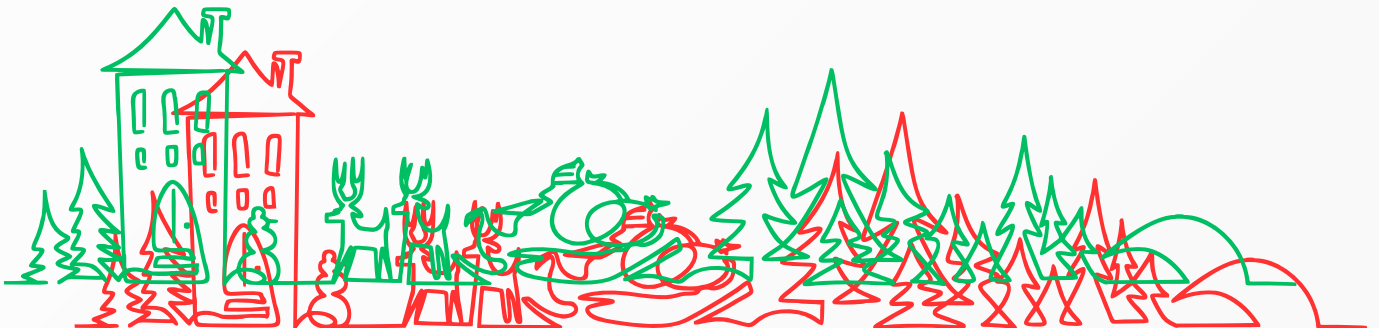
Holidays can feel like running a marathon... barefoot... while juggling flaming candy canes. But take a breath—it's going to be OK. You've got this, and you're not alone.

Here's a '12 Days of Christmas' survival guide to help you stay calm, regulated, and ready to actually enjoy some holiday moments with your crew.



Mike Lepis

Parent Coach for dads raising neurodiverse kids



12 DAYS OF
HOLIDAY SANITY
FOR DADS

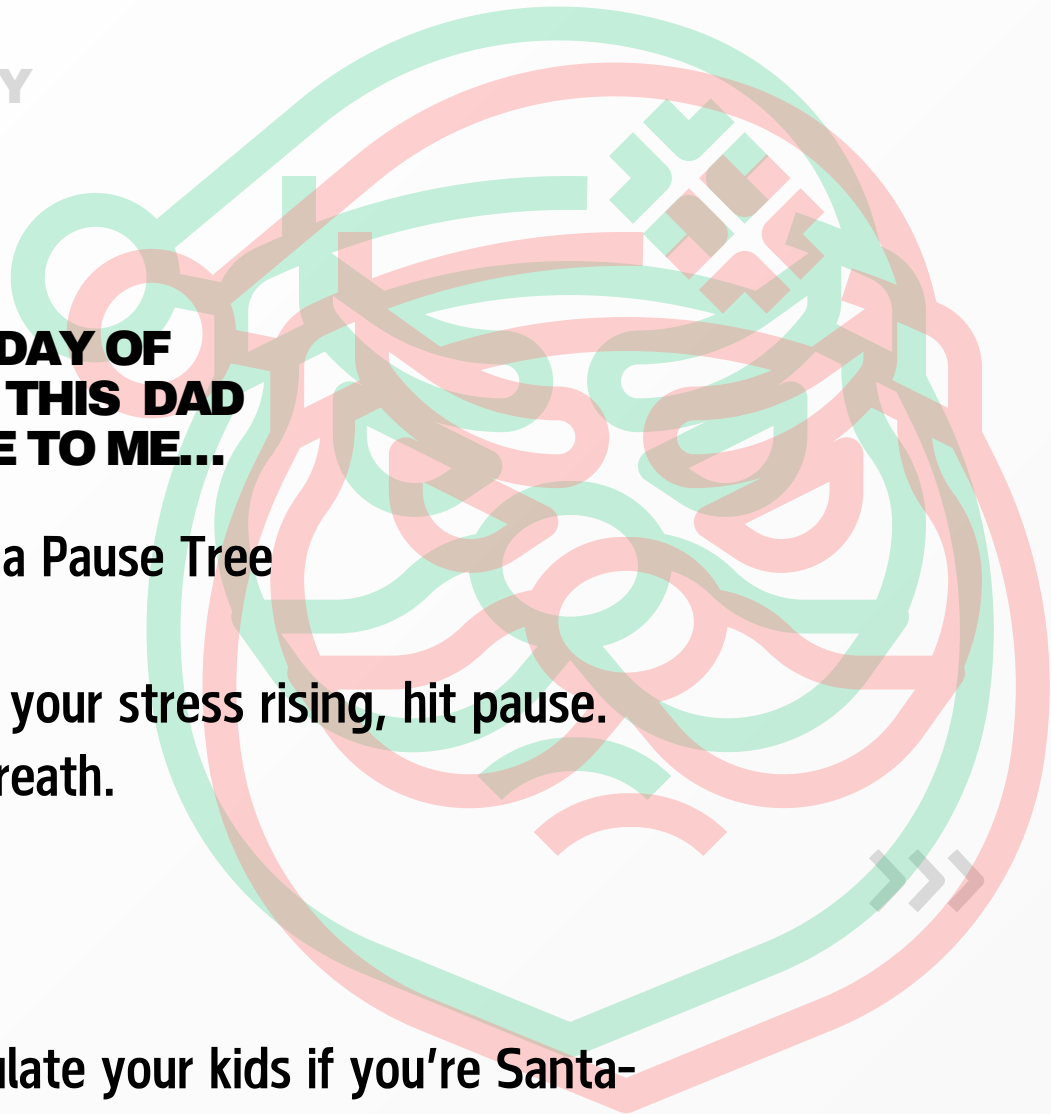
**ON THE 1ST DAY OF
CHRISTMAS, THIS DAD
COACH GAVE TO ME...**

A Partridge in a Pause Tree

When you feel your stress rising, hit pause.
Take a deep breath.

Maybe two.

You can't regulate your kids if you're Santa-level wound up. A quick 5-minute breather (yes, hiding in the garage counts) can reset your system.



12 DAYS OF
HOLIDAY SANITY
FOR DADS

**ON THE 2ND DAY OF
CHRISTMAS...**

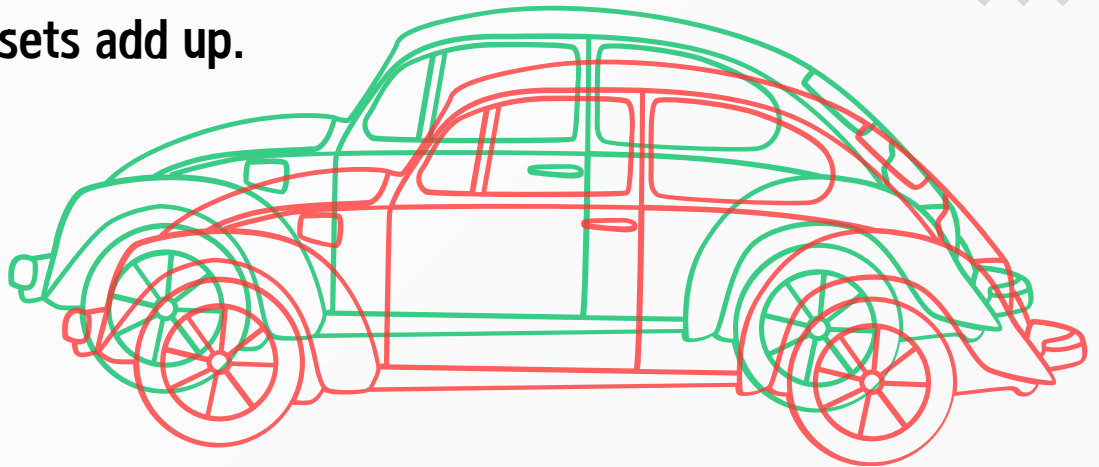
Two-Minute Rule

Think you don't have time for a reset/recharge?

**Lies! If you have 2 minutes, you can do something: stretch,
drink water, sit in your car in silence before going inside.**



Little resets add up.



ON THE 3RD DAY OF CHRISTMAS...

Three Words: Lower. Your. Expectations.

Your kid doesn't need a Pinterest-perfect holiday. If they hate the noise of carolers or think your aunt's turkey is too smelly—it's OK. A happy kid > perfect tradition.



12 DAYS OF
HOLIDAY SANITY
FOR DADS



ON THE 4TH DAY OF CHRISTMAS...

Four Walls of Comfort

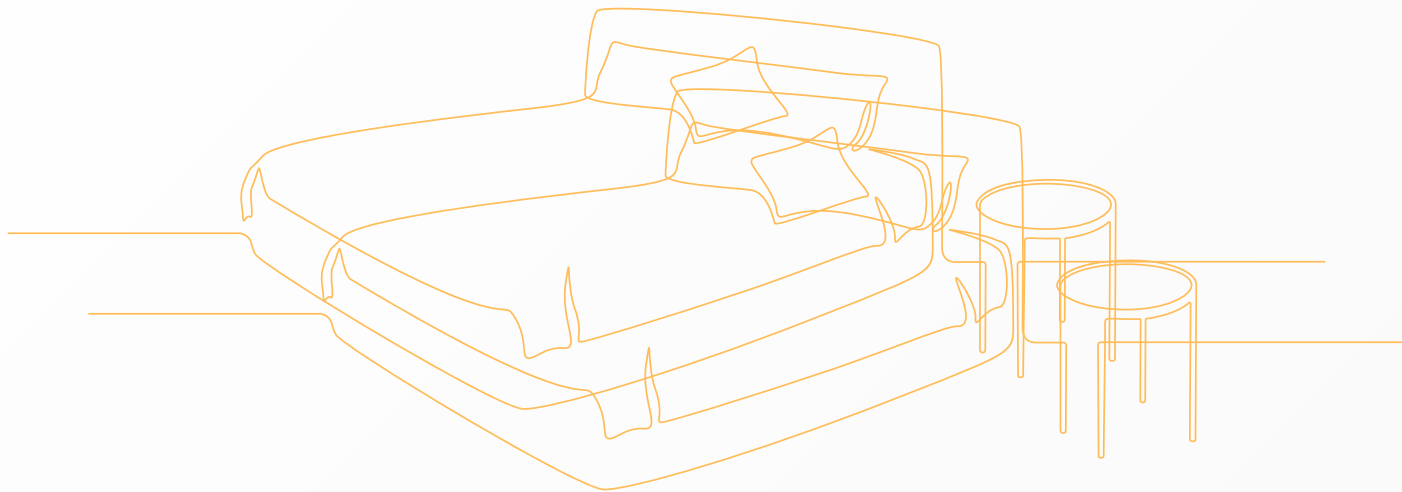


Create a 'safe zone' for your kid—a quiet corner, a favorite toy, noise-canceling headphones.

Your kid needs to escape? They'll know where to go.

Dads, you can use it too. Nobody said forts are just for kids.

12 DAYS OF
HOLIDAY SANITY
FOR DADS



**ON THE 5TH DAY OF
CHRISTMAS...**

Five Golden Zzzzz's



Sleep. It's non-negotiable. You're no good to anyone (yourself included) on 3 hours of sleep and leftover cookies.

Prioritize rest, or at least a nap when the kids crash.



ON THE 6TH DAY OF CHRISTMAS...

Pack emergency snacks.

Hungry kid = meltdowns. Hungry dad = grumpy.

Goldfish, granola bars, or straight-up beef jerky
–stock up and stash them in your glovebox,
coat, or Santa hat.



12 DAYS OF
HOLIDAY SANITY
FOR DADS



ON THE 7TH DAY OF CHRISTMAS...

Seven 'No' Responses

Repeat after me:



"No, we can't stay for another 3 hours."

"No, we don't need to visit 5 houses in one day."

Protect your family's energy. Saying no is a gift to everyone.

ON THE 8TH DAY OF CHRISTMAS...

Eight Ways to Let Them Move

Don't fight the wiggles. Find ways for your kid to move: a dance break, a snowy walk, throwing snowballs at Dad (you're welcome).

Movement helps with regulation—for them and you.



**12 DAYS OF
HOLIDAY SANITY
FOR DADS**

ON THE 9TH DAY OF CHRISTMAS...

Nine Pep Talks to Your Inner Dad

Remind yourself:

- You're a great dad.
- Meltdowns aren't failures.
- Nobody remembers who wrapped the gifts.
- You're showing up. That's what matters.
- They learned that word at school and not from you.



ON THE 10TH DAY OF CHRISTMAS...

Ten Quiet Minutes Together

Find small, quiet moments with your kid: snuggling, reading a book, watching their favorite (repeated) holiday show. These micro-connections keep the chaos in check.*



12 DAYS OF
HOLIDAY SANITY
FOR DADS

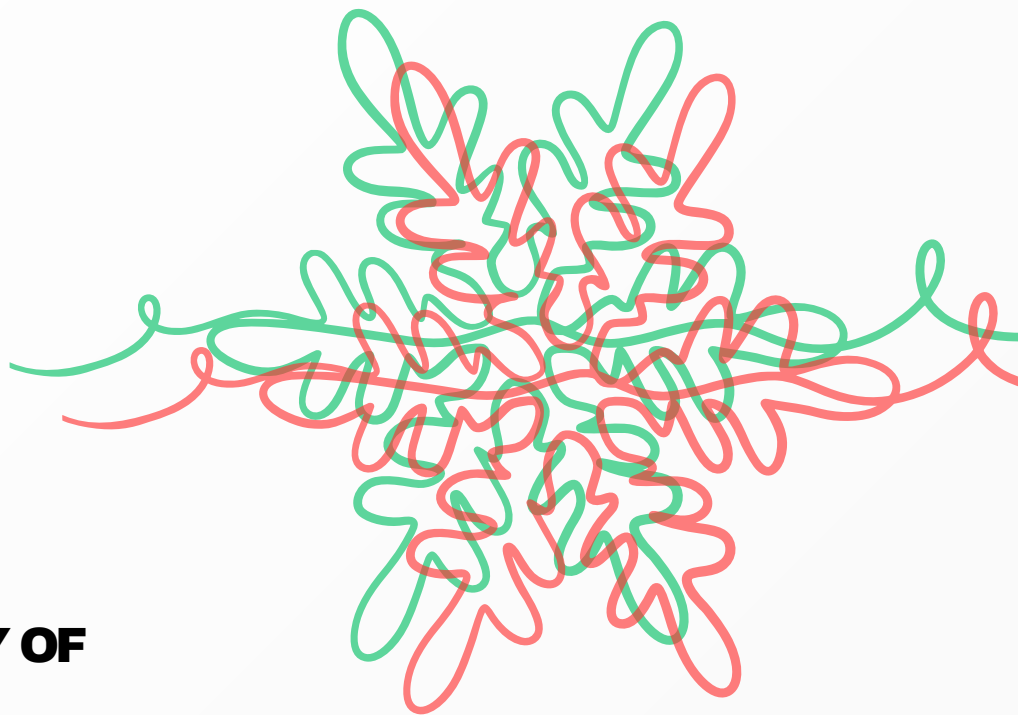


**ON THE 11TH DAY OF
CHRISTMAS...**

Eleven Seconds to Laugh

Don't take it all too seriously. Holiday stress is real, but laughter is magic. Your kid just decorated the dog with tinsel? Take a picture, laugh, then untangle the dog.

12 DAYS OF
HOLIDAY SANITY
FOR DADS



**ON THE 12TH DAY OF
CHRISTMAS...**

Twelve Memories That Matter

Let go of perfection. Focus on what matters: memories.

Your kid may not remember the perfect dinner, but they'll remember you dancing like an awkward elf or reading stories by the tree.



**12 DAYS OF
HOLIDAY SANITY
FOR DADS**

Remember, the holidays aren't about 'doing it all'—they're about showing up, laughing at the messes, and creating moments you'll actually want to remember.

Take care of yourself, support your kid, and don't be afraid to ask for help when you need it.

You're doing an amazing job.

Keep going—you've got this!*



* And if you mess this up, there is always next Christmas. They all blend together later on, you have a buffer.

12 DAYS OF
HOLIDAY SANITY
FOR DADS

I'm Mike, a parent coach for dads raising neurodiverse kids.

You might be feeling bad about how you are doing this 'dad thing' along with everything else. I've been there/still there, and want to help.

I'd love to hear from you and see if we can make things better.

If now is not a good time, I get it. I'll be sharing more and more through 2025. Stay in touch, here are a few ways:



Mike



Web | mikelepis.com



Email | ml@mikelepis.com



Facebook Group | "I was a better parent before I had kids"

