

autism  
together



# Tips for an autism-friendly Christmas

Christmas can be a magical time, but if someone in your family is on the spectrum, there's extra pressure to get it right. These simple pointers may help:

1

Have a designated place to relax and retreat, especially if you plan to have a houseful of guests. You could even label it as a 'quiet room'.

2

Be clear about when friends, family or neighbours may visit. Write up a schedule and stick it on the fridge or somewhere it is easily accessible.

3

Use advent calendars to your advantage – a countdown can be really beneficial to make people aware of upcoming events.

4

Some families opt for a one-day Christmas, when decorations and lights are put up and taken down in the same day.

5

Alternatively, how about decorating a designated 'Christmas room' to limit the impact of changes to other rooms in the house.

6

Look at the world through the eyes of your loved one – what aspects of Christmas do they enjoy? There are no rules – Christmas can be whatever works for you and your family.



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# 12 Tips for an autism-friendly Christmas



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Have some Christmas-free time away from the festivities – this can be helpful to reduce anxiety. A quiet stroll in the park or feeding the ducks could help, if this is what you normally do to relax.

8

Father Christmas can cause anxiety. Prepare your loved one by showing them pictures, or perhaps Father Christmas could drop off presents at a family member's house instead.

9

Find out about local events, such as autism-friendly grottos and pantomimes. Decide which events your loved one would enjoy and book in advance.

10

Christmas dinners can be individual, so stick to what you know will be popular. Who says it has to be roast turkey?

11

On Christmas Day, try and keep to a routine that suits your family. If you need to make changes, then prepare in advance, using photos or social stories to explain what is happening.

12

Christmas is about enjoying yourself. It's your time, too, so always ask for help from family and friends if you need it.



**Wishing you a very merry Christmas and happy New Year!**

Autism Together's children and families service offers parenting courses, social groups, activities for little ones and support groups for families.

And we do so much more!

Read about us at [www.autismtogether.co.uk](http://www.autismtogether.co.uk)