

**Top Stories**

- Noah Pozner & Jack Pinto Laid to Rest in First Funerals Since School Shooting
- Hilary Duff: I May Be 'One and Done' with My Son Luca
- Inside Cacey Cobb and Donald Faison's 'Down-Home Wedding'

StyleWatch | STYLE NEWS NOW

# The Official StyleWatch Guide to a Stress-Free Holiday Party Season

11/23/2012 AT 10:00 AM ET

Share Tweet Like 53 +1 1 0 Comments Permalink



GETTY

Headed to your high school reunion this weekend? Meeting your boyfriend's family for the first time? Getting nervous about your office holiday party? Whatever events are coming your way in the weeks ahead, we have two words for you: don't sweat. Because with these 10 tips — offered up by some party-going pros — you'll be the star of any festive fête this season.

- If the invite doesn't specify a dress code ...** Go for an LBD. "It's a classic for a reason," says Bobbi Thomas, *Today's* style editor. "Go for a look that's versatile and can be dressed up or down with accessories and makeup."
- Feel great all night long** Before you go to a big event, prep yourself by staying hydrated and eating a little. "Drinking lots of water and eating a small meal before a big event is the best way to prepare," says Kim Castellano of [solutionthatstick.com](#). "If you've already eaten, you won't hover over the cheese plate for the first hour of the party!"
- Dress smart for your office party** The rule of thumb is that you shouldn't stray too far from the day-to-day office dress code. "Metallics and sparkle are okay, but use them sparingly," says Amanda Sanders of [New York Image Consultant](#). "Accessories are great ways to add some sparkle. And don't make this the night of firsts. This is not the event to be wearing new high heels or all-over color for the first time."
- If you're not good at remembering names ...** Get to the party early! "If you're at an event from the start, you get to meet one or two people at a time," says Benjamin Levy, author of *Remember Every Name Every Time*. "Meeting people in a staggered way will allow you to catch everyone's names one at a time as opposed to being the last one there and having to catch eight names at once."
- Mingle like a pro — even if you don't know anyone!** Before you go to a party, you can use the Internet to do some research so you don't walk in cold. "Research the host, the company or organization, or the event," says Susan RoAne, author of *How to Work a Room*. "We spend so much time figuring out how to get there and what to wear that we often forget to take a few minutes to think about who will be there and what we have in common with the other guests."
- If you're worried about being underdressed ...** Choose accessories that elevate your look. "Statement earrings can add drama instantly," says Thomas. "I always recommend bringing a wrap or pashmina and a clutch," adds Lauren A. Rothman, fashion stylist from [Styleauteur](#).
- Before you give a toast ...** Stick to drinking water or warm herbal tea. "Caffeine and alcohol dehydrate you, which exacerbates the problem of nerves and a dry mouth," says Jana Barnhill, former president of [Toastmasters International](#).
- Make small talk easy** When conversing with someone you just met, remember this no-fail phrase: "Tell me more." "It's one of the best things you can say," says Jill Spiegel, author of *How to Talk to Anyone About Anything!*. "We all want to feel valued. So if people brag, celebrate them. And if they're talking about something you don't know about, be honest and ask them to explain."
- Pack the perfect fashion emergency kit** Stash a little bag of fix-it essentials in your purse or car. "My fashion 911 kit has double-stick tape, a small sewing kit, a fresh pair of stockings or tights, lip gloss and a mini mascara," says Rothman.
- Keep calm** Finding a mantra that you can repeat may help minimize holiday stress. "Just try and avoid incorporating words that bring up how overwhelmed you are," says Kate Hanley of [msmindbody.com](#) and author of *The Anytime Anywhere Chill Guide*. "Instead of 'No stress,' try something like 'Just relax' or 'Peace' — or even something funny like 'Chill.' Give your mind something positive to focus on."

—Kristen Maxwell

WHAT TO WEAR THIS SEASON? SHOP THESE PERFECT PARTY DRESSES!

Beauty, Fashion, Holidays

ADVERTISEMENT

ANN TAYLOR

Happy Holidays!

Treat yourself to something chic...

SHOP NOW >

KATE HUDSON FOR ANN TAYLOR

tweet ticker

What's Stylish on Twitter Right Now!

**NeNe Leakes (NeNeLeakes):** RT @DarbyCarver: @NeNeLeakes is hilarious this season of #thoa girl is making me laugh my white ass off! "I mean really coo coo" <LOL

opening ceremony (openingceremony): See how we celebrated the holidays at OCLA <http://t.co/nCvmcASR>

FOLLOW @STYLEWATCHMAG

MORE ON STYLEWATCH

**So Chic! Presents Every Hostess Will Love**

READ MORE >

**Last Night's Look: Love It or Leave It?**

SEE PHOTOS >

**Shop the Holiday Party Outfit Generator!**

SEE PHOTOS >

**Tabatha Coffey's Blog: Cate Blanchett Is an 'Absolute 10'**

SEE PHOTOS >

From Our Partners

- InStyle
- The Good Wife Costume Designer Daniel Lawson Turns Guest Curator
  - The Voice Season Finale, Part One Airs Tonight: Performances by Rihanna, Kelly Clarkson, and Bruno Mars
  - Olivia Munn on Holiday Shopping: "I Love Goop!"

Stylerlist

StyleWatch CONCIERGE

YOUR GUIDE TO TRENDS, HAPPENINGS & PRODUCTS