[http://dailymom.com/portal/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/holiday-separator-560.jpg](http://dailymom.com/portal/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/holiday-separator-560.jpg)

**Things to complete in the month of November**

* **Create your Christmas gift list** - Make a list of people that you typically buy gifts for. Next, go through your list and write down an idea of what you would like to get each person. If you have a family with a lot of kids, consider having the adults buy for the kids only. Another common practice in big families is putting everyone's names in a hat and having each adult pick a name of someone to buy a gift for.
* ***Download our Christmas Gift List here:***[***word***](http://dailymom.com/portal/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Christmas-List.docx)***/[pdf](http://dailymom.com/portal/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Christmas-List1.pdf)***
* **Budget** - Create a *realistic* budget and don't go over it! Go through your Christmas list and decide how much you want to spend on each person/family. Set aside cash for the amount you have decided to spend - don't bring your credit card shopping unless you plan on using it! Consider making some *DIY gifts* for some of the people on your list. This will save money and is more personal.
* **Create Christmas card list** - Make your list of names, leaving room for the address and whether you sent and received a card from each family/person.
* ***Download our printable Christmas Card list here:***[***word***](http://dailymom.com/portal/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Christmas-Card-List.docx)***/[pdf](http://dailymom.com/portal/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Christmas-Card-List.pdf).*** Then gather your addresses and add them to the list. If you like to do *everything* digitally - put them into a ready-to-print file so you can print out labels when you are ready to send your cards out!
* **Update your Amazon personal wish list** - This is such a great way to keep track of things that you want on your list! Then you can share it with your family and friends and send them links to the items that you are hoping to get! It's a *win-win* for everyone!!
* **Get rid of Thanksgiving decor -**If you're not going shopping on Black Friday, it is a great time to take down and pack away your Thanksgiving decor.
* **Purchase/Find outfits for DIY Christmas card pics -**Once you decide what type of picture or pictures you want on your DIY cards, decide what everyone in the picture is going to wear. Go shopping if you don't already have your outfits ready! Look for clothing that is stylish but also comfortable for your children. You don't want them pulling at their collar during the photo shoot! (Check out [this](http://dailymom.com/nurture/how-to-survive-a-family-photo-shoot-stress-free/) post and [this](http://dailymom.com/make/how-to-take-a-family-photo-like-a-pro/) post for some ideas on how to take family photos.)
* **Order pre-made cards or buy at the store -**Sometimes it's just *easier* to grab [boxed holiday cards](http://www.amazon.com/Garland-Small-Holiday-Christmas-Greeting/dp/1441311785&tag=bomllcdm-20) and send them out with a family photo or picture of your kids inside. There's no problem with that! Just make sure you have the cards in plenty of time to fill them out and add the picture for your send out date in mid-December!
* **Black Friday Shopping**- If you're up for it, check out the [sales ads](http://blackfriday.com/) and see if any of the big-ticket items on your list are part of a Black Friday Deal! Research your products to make sure they have received good reviews before getting up early or staying out late in long lines for an item. Browse the deals and compare prices [here](http://blackfriday.com/) before you go out! Bring your store ads with you. Also, if you're planning on using credit cards - bring your store cards for *extra savings/deals*. Lastly, make sure you check the store hours - some are opening on Thanksgiving evening or have early bird or night owl specials!

**WEEK 1**

**Dec. 1st**

**Holiday photo shoot** - It's time to get your holiday pictures taken for the *Photo Christmas cards* you're going to be sending out! Invite a friend's family to join you and then you both can get a shot of your family without hiring a photographer! Afterwards, have a playdate with some hot cocoa and Christmas music!

**Edit/Prepare photo for DIY cards** - Try to do all of your editing the evening after your photo shoot. That way once you are ready to order your cards, you can just add your pics to the card you want and be done!

**Review/Change gift list as needed** - Go over your Christmas gift list *again* - mark off who you have finished shopping for and what items you hope to get on Cyber Monday.

**Cyber Monday shopping list** - Make a list of the items you're looking to get a deal on and the websites you want to visit. Many websites will advertise their deals ahead of time or will at least give a *hint* of what type of deals they will have in their Black Friday Ads. (Want to get inside scoop on the best deals? [Subscribe](http://dailymom.com/subscribe/) to *Daily Mom* to be the first to know of *hot brands* and their sales.)

**Dec. 2nd**

**CYBER MONDAY shopping!!**- Wear your comfy PJs, grab your cup of tea/coffee and settle down in front of your computer or tablet. Now - *shop, shop, shop*!

**Make Christmas dinner grocery list** - Create a list of the dishes that your family is responsible for making this year. Next, make a second list breaking each dish down into ingredients. Try to split this list into nonperishable items (including alcohol) and fresh items - as you make it. You may want to consider making a *separate* list for cookie baking ingredients if you plan on making them early and freezing them or are participating in a cookie exchange.

**Make Reservations** - If your family plans on *going out* to dinner for Christmas Eve or Christmas Day, you should make your reservations now!

**Dec. 3rd**

**Order DIY Photo Christmas cards** - Some of our favorites are Cardstore, Paper Culture, & Mpix. [Subscribe](http://dailymom.com/subscribe/) to Daily Mom to see our upcoming post about our favorite holiday cards!

**Take inventory of Christmas wrapping supplies** - Hopefully you shopped for some of these things last year at the after-Christmas sales! Make sure you have plenty of gift boxes, gift bags, gift card holders, wrapping paper, ribbon,tape and bows!!! *Make a Christmas list* *of supplies* you may still need to complete your wrapping. It's important to get these supplies early because then you can wrap gifts as you buy them. Try to designate an area or room in your house for wrapping and keep all your supplies there. Each family member can just "reserve" that area when they need to get their wrapping done rather than moving the supplies all around the house.

**Dec. 4th**

**Take inventory of Christmas decorations and lights** - Check to make sure everything is still intact after being stowed away over the last year. Plug your lights in and change any bulbs that are out. If there are items that need to be replaced, add to your *Christmas supply list!!!* Make sure you add any supplies that you will need for DIY decorations you are planning on creating as well.

**Dec. 5th**

**Take inventory of dinnerware and serving ware**- Count your dishes, eating utensils, serving utensils, drinking glasses, wine glasses, serving plates and bowls. Be sure that you have enough to accommodate all of your planned guests plus a couple extra. If you are having a larger party, consider any extras you may need such as [warming trays](http://www.amazon.com/Nostalgia-Electrics-BCD992-3-Section-Warming/dp/B000HKIKIM&tag=bomllcdm-20), [punch bowls](http://www.amazon.com/Artland-Simplicity-8-Piece-Punch-Bowl/dp/B000SOOTIC&tag=bomllcdm-20) and [cookie/dessert stands](http://www.amazon.com/Country-Roses-Christmas-3-Tier-Stand/dp/B0084FDFYQ&tag=bomllcdm-20). Add any items you plan on buying to your *Christmas supply list*.

**Dec. 6th**

**Shop for supplies** - Decide what you are going to buy online and research before your shopping trip to make sure the items are available. Once you know what you want to pick up at the store - Head to the stores with your list! *Don't forget* to buy stamps for your Christmas cards!

**Dec. 7th**

**Start store Christmas shopping**- Now that you have had a chance to research prices, shipping costs, online availability (and have finished your Black Friday/Cyber Monday shopping), take the remainder of your list to the stores and find some gifts! *Remember* to wrap those gifts when you get home!

**Start DIY decorations**- You have the supplies you need and instructions for some cool DIY decorations! Get started with these today! [Subscribe](http://dailymom.com/subscribe/) to Daily Mom to learn how to make some great decorations in our upcoming posts!

**WEEK 2**

**Dec. 8th**

**Put out Christmas Decorations** - It's time to haul out your Christmas decor and get to decking those halls while singing some holiday tunes! Make your house *shine bright* with these [cost-effective, energy-saving LED lights](http://www.amazon.com/LEDwholesalers-Christmas-Wedding-String-Lights/dp/B002UC73P6/ref=sr_1_19?s=home-garden&ie=UTF8&qid=1385131588&sr=1-19&keywords=led+christmas+lights) so Santa will know exactly who to visit! Don't forget the pine garlands and wreaths with holiday berries that will fill your home with the scent of the season and if you want an additional boost to the scent, choose one of these beautifully scented [scentsicles](http://www.amazon.com/WOW-SCENTSICLES-HOLIDAY-PACK-Ornaments/dp/B00AOO0MB4/ref=sr_1_3?s=home-garden&ie=UTF8&qid=1385131689&sr=1-3&keywords=scentsicles" \o "Scentsicles" \t "_blank) for your tree.

**Dec. 9th**

**Buy your Christmas tree!**- Purchasing your Christmas tree each year, if you prefer the [live variety](http://www.christmastreecompany.com/Christmas-Trees-C2.aspx), or simply unpacking your [artificial tree](http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb_sb_noss_2?url=node%3D13679421&field-keywords=christmas+trees&rh=n%3A1055398%2Cn%3A13679381%2Cn%3A13679421%2Ck%3Achristmas+trees), can become quite the *memorable tradition* for years to come. Set a special date as a family for when you will either go hunting for that perfect tree or on which night you will begin unpacking your tree and getting it all set up. This date will be one that your family comes to look forward to each year, and a day your kids will remember fondly as adults when they begin creating their own traditions. You can make this an even more memorable event by making a day of it doing a *winter activity* you all enjoy such as*ice skating* before finding the perfect one, or *sipping on hot chocolate* while you warm up after unloading the tree!

**Dec. 10th**

**Set Up the Christmas Tree** - Now that you've got your *perfect tree*, whether live or unpacked and fluffed, you're ready to set it up properly in its stand and decorate! Whether you choose to decorate in designer fashion or enjoy homemade ornaments, you can divide the ornaments between family members so everyone can get involved, not to mention save you some time from having to do it all yourself! Don't worry if the ornaments aren't quite perfectly placed by the little ones, you can leave it as is to show off their efforts or you can always tweak the placement a bit after they've been tucked into bed - we won't tell! Also, be sure to keep your live tree looking beautiful the entire season with some of these [great tips](http://www.realchristmastrees.org/dnn/AllAboutTrees/CareTips.aspx) from the *National Christmas Tree Association*.

**Put up the stockings** - Hang up the stockings by the chimney with care and if you need a little help placing them without drilling hooks into your mantel, check out these [beautiful mantel hooks](http://www.amazon.com/MantleClip-Stocking-Holders-Antique-Brass/dp/B001N7FN5Q/ref=sr_1_2?ie=UTF8&qid=1385097321&sr=8-2&keywords=stocking+hooks) that will hold even the fullest of stockings without worry!

**Place any catering orders** - There are a number of items you can have catered but you'll have to do some of the legwork yourself in securing your order in advance for that perfectly [roasted turkey](http://www.magickitchen.com/menu/family.html), [spiral-sliced ham](http://www.honeybaked.com/), or special [seasonal dessert](http://www.harryanddavid.com/h/chocolates-sweets-candy/cheesecake-factory?DM_PersistentCookieCreated=true&cm_re=bb-_-ccf-_-cheesecakefactory&ref=TheCheesecakeFactory&ddkey=http:BECGo). Remember to *get your orders in as early as possible* to ensure you have the most options for variety and quantity of food items, as well as custom additions if necessary, and pickup times.

**Dec. 11th**

**Ship Out Of Town Gifts** - Don't put this one off! You want to make sure *your loved ones receive the gifts* you have so thoughtfully chosen for them in time for Christmas. Get those addresses out and get to the post office, UPS store, or even print shipping labels from your own home if you've got the shipping supplies handy. Take advantage of shipping early so you aren't having to pay more later for expedited shipping costs. For holiday shipping guidelines: [USPS](https://www.usps.com/holiday/), [UPS](http://www.ups.com/content/us/en/resources/ship/imp_exp/operation.html), [FedEx](http://www.fedex.com/hu_english/holidays/index.html)

**Dec. 12th**

**Plan Christmas dinner**- Finalize the details of your Christmas dinner menu so you can create a shopping list from the recipes you've decided on and then *organize recipes* by amount of time they consume to make and the ease of preparation. Take into account anything you can prep ahead of time, even 2-3 days prior, like pie crusts or cutting the bread into cubes for stuffing, so you can take a load off of yourself the day of so you can fully enjoy the day with your family and not have to slave in the kitchen all day long. You will really thank yourself for this one, we promise! [Subscribe](http://dailymom.com/subscribe/) to *Daily Mom* to make sure you receive all of our holiday recipes.

**Dec. 13th**

**Finish homemade gifts** - This is the perfect timing to finish any of those homemade gifts you've been meaning to get around to doing! Get inspired by checking out [our Pinterest page](http://www.pinterest.com/dailymompins/make/) for ideas and use this weekend to get these special gifts completed in time to have fun with it and allow for any necessary drying time before wrapping them up! ([These](http://dailymom.com/shine/easy-diy-lip-balm/) also make great Christmas gifts)

**Dec. 14th**

**Address your Christmas cards and send them out!**- Now that your Christmas cards are in hand *don't wait to address, stamp, and send them*! Allow yourself enough time to do this as it is usually one of the more time consuming, tedious tasks but don't skimp! Everyone enjoys receiving mail other than email so *take the time to write a special note* in each card if you'd like or simply send them as they are if you've had them custom designed and you can check another task off that to-do list.

**WEEK 3**

**Dec. 15th**

**Make dough for Christmas cookies** - and perhaps bake half of the cookies now and *freeze the rest* of the dough to make and decorate as a family activity once your guests arrive. If you're doing a*cookie exchange*, giving cookies as gifts, or bringing cookies to friends' holiday parties, be sure to bake enough and set them aside. Remember, cookies freeze very well in Ziplock bags or Tupperware.

**Dec. 16th**

**Mail Christmas cards -***double check* that all your cards have the appropriate postage (square cards need extra postage, as do heavy cards). Remember that *early morning* tends to be quietest at the post office if you need to speak with a clerk. Also, visit [the USPS online](https://store.usps.com/store/browse/category.jsp?categoryId=catBuyStamps&categoryNavIds=catBuyStamps) to buy stamps and save yourself a trip!

**Dec. 17th**

**Open/unpack any large toys and assemble** - To save yourself frustration later this month, especially those that come in lots of plastic packaging. Make sure you have the right size and quantity of batteries. Assemble those which need assembly and decide how you want to present gifts on Christmas Eve or Christmas morning - unwrapped and under the tree, wrapped, with a bow, etc. *Ensure you have enough wrapping paper*, especially if it's a bulky gift! It also makes Christmas morning a lot more fun and enjoyable being able to play with the gifts right away.

**Dec. 18th**

**Shop for non-perishable food items** - Head to the grocery store to shop for *non-perishable food items and alcohol* you plan to serve later this month. Consider making your list by aisle or type of food (canned goods, grains, etc.). Like the post office, grocery stores tend to be quieter in the early morning.

**Dec. 19th**

**Map out your timeline for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day -** What time will everyone arrive? Who needs a ride to/from your home? What time do flights land? Consider putting all flight information (especially flight numbers and arrival times) in one place for easy reference. Will you go to church and, if so, what service? Do your kids need to be dropped off or picked up at some point? Creating a rough timeline to reference will make for a smoother holiday for sure.

**Dec. 20th**

**Choose some tunes** - Though you've probably had Christmas music playing all month, take a moment to decide what you want playing on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. *Pandora* has beautiful Christmas stations which you can turn on and stream all day if you'd prefer not to deal with CDs.

**Dec. 21st**

**Deliver gifts** - Deliver gifts to neighbors, your mailman, newspaper deliveryman, and others you wish to remember this Christmas.

**Set the table -**Silver may need polishing, wine glasses washing, and napkins folding. Set out the serving dishes and utensils you intend to use for each part of your meal so you're not hunting for one more serving spoon on Christmas morning. *Set the table now*, so that you have one less task to complete on the big night.

**Prepare home for guests** - Perhaps arrange one final cleaning of your home, or tackle it yourself, focusing on areas guests will see - guest bathrooms, the living room, kitchen, entryway, etc.

**WEEK 4**

**Dec. 22nd**

**Shop for Fresh Ingredients** - This is the week to get all your food preparation done. Shop for all your fresh ingredients for Christmas dinner and don't forget to buy flowers. *Poinsettias* are more festive but there are other options such as [*Winter Roses*](http://www.amazon.com/Helleborus-niger-White-Christmas-Rose/dp/B00EVSVP24/ref=sr_1_1?s=lawn-garden&ie=UTF8&qid=1385175118&sr=1-1&keywords=Christmas+rose&tag=bomllcdm-20), [*Christmas Cactus*](http://www.amazon.com/9GreenBox-Christmas-Cactus-Plant-Zygocactus/dp/B00AB5WI7W/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1385175046&sr=8-1&keywords=christmas+cactus&tag=bomllcdm-20) and of course *Mistletoe*.

**Food Preparation for Christmas Dinner** - You can now begin to prep the food for Christmas dinner so you'll have less work to do on the big day. *Bake some cookies* from the batch you froze earlier in the weeks. *Chop your vegetables* and store in an airtight containers.

**Wrap remaining presents** - If you have any presents left for wrapping make sure they are done now so that you don't have to worry last minute.

**Dec. 23rd**

**Create timeline for Christmas dinner** - It's one more day to the big night, so make a timeline for dinner and count backwards to figure out when to *thaw out the turkey* if you plan on serving one. It will make everything go more smoothly and your turkey will be ready in time.

**Charge your camera** - Since you will be taking lots of pictures in the next couple days *don't forget to charge your camera(s)* and/or camcorder so that you don't miss any photo opportunities.

**Dec. 24th**

**Get Cooking** - The big night is here so start preparing dinner and popping that turkey (or ham) in the oven. You can bake more cookies because surely they will go fast. (Looking for an alternative way to prepare your turkey? Check out [this recipe](http://dailymom.com/nest/bbq-grilled-thanksgiving-turkey/))

**Set up your camera gear** - If you are going to be taking family photos, set up your camera/camcorder with a tripod ready to go. You might want to*invest in a remote shutter*(for[Canon](http://www.amazon.com/Photive-Wireless-Shutter-Release-Replacement/dp/B005UFZ7F8/ref=sr_1_6?ie=UTF8&qid=1385175312&sr=8-6&keywords=remote+shutter+for+canon&tag=bomllcdm-20) users & for [Nikon](http://www.amazon.com/Photive-Wireless-Shutter-Release-Replaces/dp/B005UG3KS8/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1385175376&sr=8-1&keywords=remote+shutter+for+nikon&tag=bomllcdm-20) users) if you don't have one.

**Enjoy Dinner**  - You have spent weeks preparing for tonight's festivities and the night has finally begun. Take this time to*enjoy every aspect of your preparation with your loving family*.

**Cookies for Santa** - Don't forget to put out cookies for Santa before the kids go to bed. You might want to create a "Santa was here" look to the house to get the kids excited the next day. [Subscribe](http://dailymom.com/subscribe/) to *Daily Mom* to get some creative ideas.  
**Put out gifts** - Once the littles are fast asleep. Place all those wrapped presents under the tree and prep for Christmas breakfast, to an extent.

**Dec. 25th**

**Open presents and enjoy breakfast as a family -** Christmas day is here and now it's time to have fun. 4 weeks of planning and it has finally come to a close.  
*Make sure to document this occasion and include yourself in the photos*.

[http://dailymom.com/portal/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/holiday-separator-560.jpg](http://dailymom.com/portal/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/holiday-separator-560.jpg)