



The holidays are fast approaching, and with them the familiar feelings of stress, hustle and bustle. This holiday season, take the time to de-stress for holiday success with these yoga poses and tips:

1. **Get Grounded in Tadasana.** Find your feet. Sometimes simply standing on solid ground will help give us the energy we need to get through our holiday to-do list. Stand with your feet hip distance apart. Lift your toes and pull your inner ankles back and outer ankles down. Feel the four corners of your feet. Soften your knees, engage your core, and stand in your own personal power. Breathe deeply.

Move your body--- go to a yoga class, a spinning class, take a walk or ride your bike. Get energy moving through your body to help you keep things moving in the right direction. If you only have 10 minutes, try a few rounds of Surya Namaskar, or Sun Salutation. These asanas awaken the entire body, and help sharpen the mind-body connection that stress sometimes clouds. Get moving. For step by step instructions, visit <http://www.yogasite.com/sunsalute.htm>

3. **Breathe like a fish.** In Matsyasana, or Fish Pose, we open up our lungs to let it all in--- the good with the bad, the challenging with the easy. Approach life wide open, breathe in all that is, and wash the stress away.

4. **Make Room for Meditation.** Meditation is like a nap for your brain. A simple 5 minute meditation can help sharpen your mind and bring even a hectic holiday frenzy into focus. Stop trying to make everything perfect. Take 5 minutes of quiet time and reflect on what the holidays mean to you.

5. **Turn Things Upside Down.** You don't have to be an experienced yogi or an acrobat to go upside down. Take Vipariti Karini, or Legs Up The Wall Pose. Place your hips on a yoga block or a cushion, and your legs straight up a wall. Cover your eyes. Turn off the tv and turn on some relaxing music. Tune out the outside and tune in to the inside.

6. **Feed Your Body and Your Soul Well.** As important as it is to nurture your mood during the holiday season, it's also important to nurture your body with good food. It is so easy to overeat during the holiday season, and maybe to over-do some other things as well. Take it easy on yourself. Pay attention to what you put in your body. If you overdo something, counter it with putting healthy and nourishing foods in your body. What you put in your body has a direct correlation with how you feel.

This Holiday, Practice Happiness

Written by Shelley Lowther

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7. **Be Still and Know.** As my teacher Baron Baptiste says, the whole is the goal. Stop trying so hard. Step back from the holiday madness and be still. Take a bath. Take a nap. Take an amazing savasana at the end of a yoga practice. But be still. Don't worry if every detail is perfect. Remember why you are celebrating the holidays, and keep things in perspective.

If you are practicing happiness, the holiday will be merry and bright. Take care of yourself, and have a happy holiday season. Om shanti shanti shanti--- peace, peace, peace.

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