

THE Spinal COLUMN

Life is better when you're aligned!

THE HOLIDAYS ARE COMING... RELAX!



The holidays are supposed to be one of the most joyous times of the year, and surveys show that most Americans do feel positive emotions like happiness, love, and high spirits often during this season. On the other hand, emotions of all kinds are increased, and this includes negative feelings like anxiety, grief, and stress.

Many people report increased stress during the holidays as they try to pull together the "perfect" holiday for their families, which often means balancing work and social obligations with shopping, decorating, cooking, cleaning, wrapping, and baking.

Financial pressures also tend to peak at this time of year, as do worries over having enough money to purchase gifts without running up credit card debt. Even worries related to work, including wrapping up year-end projects or getting enough time off, run high during the holiday season.

LEARN TO RELAX YOUR BREATHING

When you find yourself getting caught up in anxious thoughts about how you'll get everything done, stop and remember that most people say spending time with their family and friends is what they look forward to most about the holidays. This season should not be about stress... it should be about relaxing and sharing good times with those you love.

One of the best, and simplest, ways to calm your nerves when you're feeling tense or anxious is to practice more mindful breathing. Deep breathing activates your parasympathetic nervous system, which induces the relaxation response. There are many different breathing practices that you can try, but we're going to share one that is very easy to perform.

The key to this exercise is to remember the numbers 4, 7, and 8. It's not important to focus on how much time you spend in each phase of the breathing activity, but rather that you get the ratio correct. Here's how it's done:

1. **Sit up straight**
2. **Place the tip of your tongue up against the back of your front teeth. Keep it there through the entire breathing process**
3. **Breathe in silently through your nose to the count of FOUR**
4. **Hold your breath to the count of SEVEN**
5. **Exhale through your mouth to the count of EIGHT, making an audible "woosh" sound**
6. **That completes one full breath. Repeat the cycle another three times**

You can do this 4-7-8 exercise as frequently as you want throughout the day. The benefits of this simple practice are enormous and work as a natural tranquilizer for your nervous system.

A photograph showing several pairs of hands holding up large, three-dimensional red letters. The letters spell out the words "REDUCE STRESS" in a bold, sans-serif font. The hands are positioned behind the letters, and the background is white.

DID YOU
KNOW?

Maintaining good relationships with your friends and family, reduces harmful levels of stress and boosts your immune system.



10 MORE TIPS!

If you're feeling overwhelmed and stressed, it's time to put the following relaxation plan into action. Once you're feeling relaxed, it will help you find greater happiness and purpose as you go about your day. Ideally, don't wait until stress becomes all-consuming... make it a habit to use these relaxation strategies regularly and often, especially before, during and after the holidays:

1. Exercise

Exercise affects a neurotransmitter that has an antidepressant-like effect on your brain while helping to decrease muscle tension.

2. Spend Time in Nature

Even five minutes in nature can help reduce stress and boost your mood, helping you to relax.

3. Participate in Activities You Enjoy

Be sure to leave time for the holiday activities you love most, whether it's decorating or writing holiday cards.

4. Stay Positive

Those who are optimistic have an easier time dealing with stress and are more inclined to open themselves up for opportunities to have positive, regenerative experiences.

5. Take a Break

Taking even 10 minutes to sit quietly and shut out the chaos around you can trigger your relaxation response.

6. Live in the Present

Turn off your racing mind and simply focus on only the task at hand. Avoid worrying about what you need to do later in the day or tomorrow.

7. Nurture Yourself

Try massage, a hot bath, mini-relaxations, or a quick walk to ease tension. Be sure you're eating right, sleeping well, and laughing often.

8. Be Grateful

Focus on what you're grateful for. Keep a gratitude journal and write down why you're grateful each day.

9. Use Visualization

Close your eyes and imagine yourself relaxing on the beach or sitting in front of a cozy fireplace with your family. You can also visualize your "perfect" holiday, which is especially useful if you're worrying over what might go wrong.

10. Be Sure You are in Alignment

Holding is healing is what we say! Schedule an appointment with your upper cervical chiropractor to ensure you are in alignment and your brain is effectively communicating with all parts of your body. You don't need that stress!

Credit: <http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2013/12/23/holiday-stress-relief.aspx>

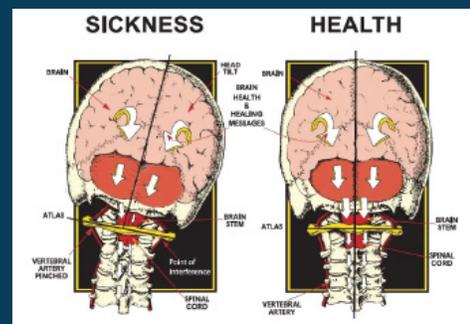


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IS YOUR HEAD ON STRAIGHT?



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"The Power of Upper Cervical"
Thursday, Nov 11 & Dec 2 at 6:30 pm

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