

Client: Stress Relief for the Holidays | Proposed # of Sessions: 4

Planned time per session: 60-75 minutes

Presenting Problem – common and predictable stressors during the holiday season. Lots of triggers and challenges with boundaries, holiday-related melancholy, overcommitting and exhaustion.

Clients' Goals – adopt tools and practices for getting through these challenges as quickly and easily as possible.

Physical / Energetic Kosha – Offer a select series of asanas to promote body awareness and connection while soothing the nervous system enabling participants to observe and identify their current state to cultivate on-the-spot self-regulation micro-practices or hacks in order to return to present moment and find balance.

Pranayama – to promote relaxation, breath and body awareness. 3-Part Breath, Alternate Nostril and Voo Breath practices.

Yoga Nidra - for body awareness and deep relaxation

Emotional / Mental –

Raja Yoga – Sutra 1.2 – *“The restraint of the modifications of the mind-stuff is Yoga.”*

Brief discussion regarding this key Sutra relative to participants' intentions for managing stressors throughout the holiday season. Followed by a discussion re cultivating the Purusha, or Inner Witness, enabling participants to step back and observe thoughts. One possible technique - label anxious thoughts to create space to redirect thoughts. Knowing that all thoughts come and go, we'll discuss the nature of impermanence and our True Nature / identity, which is not our thoughts.

This will serve as basis for a brief guided meditation regarding 'Chitta' and the nature of waves of the mind - thoughts and feelings that come and go. We are the Ocean and the Waves are a part of us, but not our True Nature, which is Peace.

Sutra 2.35 - *“In the presence of one firmly established in nonviolence, all hostilities cease.”*

We'll discuss the nature of Ahimsa relative to self-care and the relentless demands and expectations we place upon ourselves. We'll consider the courage it takes for self-reflection - Svadyaya or Pratyahara to connect with self-compassion. By doing so, we can find balance and ease.

Spiritual Orientation –

Participants are spiritually open and aware. The Sutras and mindfulness practices we'll explore will enable us to cultivate the Purusha along with self-love and self-compassion for all that we're faced with in our daily lives.

Scientific Research –

[Yoga, mindfulness-based stress reduction and stress-related physiological measures: A meta-analysis](#)

This meta-analysis summarized an array of research projects that confirmed the pragmatic and effective benefits of Yoga and mindfulness practices to ease and reverse stress. In addition, no need to complete a full class every day. Learn a variety of asanas to choose from on a daily basis based upon what your body is needing in the moment.

- (1) Moderate asana sequence with breath awareness - basic warm-ups, sun salutations, balancing, supine postures including twists and reclining pigeon. Learning the importance of moving the back in all 3 planes on a daily basis.
- (2) Select breath practices for self-regulation, including 3-Part Breath, Alternate Nostril Breathing, Voo Breath and Breath of Joy
- (3) Yoga Nidra for cultivating deep relaxation and body awareness.

Contraindications to allow for body limitations due to injury, understanding the subtle power of breath practices and to return to normal breathing if one starts to feel dizzy or funny. No apparent contraindications for Yoga Nidra - give oneself and body time to learn to relax and let go. No judgements or stories, simply observing with curiosity and openness.

Wisdom Research –

Yoga Sutra 2.35 - *“In the presence of one firmly established in nonviolence, all hostilities cease.”*

“Creating balance in our lives is not an easy thing. We are a hungry, noisy people, bombarded with stimulation and advertisements that promise to grant us our deepest desires. If we are not on purpose with creating balance for ourselves, we can easily fall victim to false promises and fill every breathable space with appointments and activities and all the responsibilities that go with a full agenda. It is anti-cultural to claim any space that is simply space, or to move with any kind of lingering, or to take time for closure. We are bombarded and we bombard ourselves. And if we have any doubts, our calendars will reveal the truth of our craziness. The repercussions are inescapable, immeasurable violence to ourselves and those around us.

Like the body, the mind and soul need time to digest and assimilate. Like the body, the mind and soul need time to rest. We create this rest by allowing space that we can breathe in. Not more clutter, but more space, space to reflect, space to journal, space for closure, space for imagination, and space to feel the calling of the life force within us.”

--*The Yamas & Niyamas*, by Deborah Adele

Lifestyle Practice –

Sankalpa – conscious intention in our daily lives - during the holidays and beyond. As we make these Sankalpas, being of service, and showing up for holiday events, etc., we can practice Ahimsa as well for the sake of self-care by choosing and committing to reasonable and balanced actions. Sankalpa also calls upon each one of us to consider what is ours to do and what isn't ours to do. That is, appropriate and conscious boundaries, which is also self-care by not over-committing or showing up for gatherings, etc. that aren't enjoyable or comfortable for us.

