

Holiday de-Stress

The holidays are upon us. For many people, that means shop till you drop, clean, cook, get dressed up, be social, and have a good time. The only problem is that exercise and “down time” often get left out of the equation. We rev up the sympathetic nervous system (the “fight or flight”, “go-get'em” part of the nervous system), to the detriment of the parasympathetic nervous system (the meditative, hang out and relax, deep sleep part of the nervous system). With the sympathetic nervous system revved up, metabolism slows down (indigestion, anyone?), breathing speeds up and becomes shallow, and fatigue sets in.

It doesn't take much time or energy to bring balance back into this sometimes depleting time of year. A restorative yoga practice can stimulate the parasympathetic nervous system and bring calm back into your breath and mind (and digestion!) Doing one or more of the following yoga poses can help stabilize

your mind and your nervous system so that you can enjoy the festivities without feeling out of balance. Following are a few poses and their general benefits. Choose the poses that feel good to you, or ones that have the benefits that you are seeking. Do them before going to bed, first thing in the morning, or when you are in need of a break from your schedule. Ideally, poses are done on an empty stomach (3 or more hours after a large meal) or at least one half hour after a snack. If you don't have a bolster, blankets stacked 2-6 inches in height work well.

1. A) Supported forward fold B) forward fold with chair and C) forward fold with bent legs.

Benefits: opens up the lower back, calms mental agitation, helps with insomnia, quiets the organs of digestion and elimination (stomach, intestines, liver).

2. Twist over bolster.

Benefits: relieves stress in the back muscles, enhances deep breathing, aids in digestion.

3. A) Legs up the wall pose B) legs on a chair.

Benefits: helps to lower blood pressure, reduces swelling and

fatigue in the legs, relaxes the organs of the abdomen and the muscles of the low back.

4. A) Backbend over bolster B) with legs bent.

Benefits: Aids in digestion by toning the liver, stomach and kidneys. Reduces fatigue.

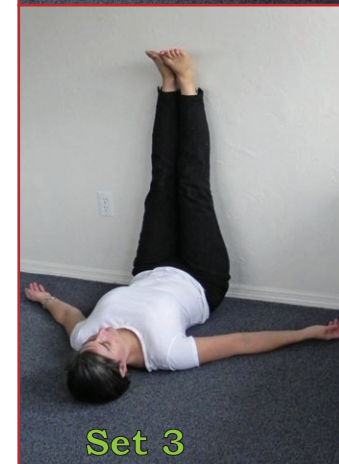
Remember that these poses are only suggestions. If you are pregnant, have severe back pain or other medical conditions, I urge you to talk to your medical doctor or call me to schedule a consultation before beginning a yoga practice.

**The Yoga Sutras are a group of aphorisms based on Vedic texts, and were edited by the sage Patanjali in the 4th century BCE. They define the characteristics of yoga in great depth.*

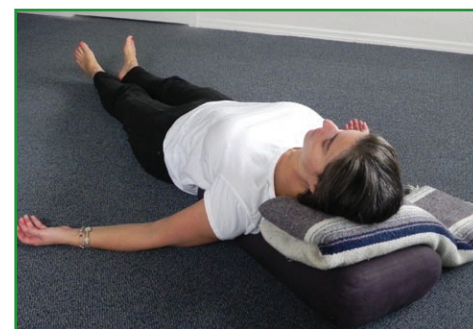
Paola Feher founded Bozeman Center for the Healing Arts in 1997 after receiving her master's degree in biomechanics. Her training emphasizes observation of human bodies in motion, focusing on performance, injury prevention and rehabilitation. Paola is currently certified by the Yoga Alliance (E-RYT 500). Paola specializes in the treatment of chronic pain and injury rehabilitation. She can be contacted at www.bozemanhealingarts.com.



Set 2



Set 3



Set 4



Set 1

