

Stress Relief for the Holidays

Tips for Coping

with Marcelle from Chronically Surviving

About Me: Chronically Surviving & Asintmah Healing

- ★ FMF, EDS, Narcolepsy Type 1
- ★ Anxiety, ADHD, C-PTSD
- ★ Founder & Owner of Chronically Surviving:
 - A platform to empower people with chronic conditions
- ★ Asintmah (Ah-ss-in-t-m-ah) Healing:
 - Multidisciplinary Compassionate Care Worker
 - Accessible Yoga & Meditation Teacher
- ★ Lead of Patient Stories and Outreach for Our Odyssey
- ★ Holistic Care Companion for Hospice Toronto



Stress & The Holidays

- ★ Challenges with Get-Togethers
 - Physical challenges like travel and long periods of time without rest
 - Emotional challenges like personal questions and opinions
- ★ Know that your feelings are valid and you're not alone!



Stress & Our Nervous System

- ★ Stress causes shifts in the nervous system.
- ★ Chronic stress makes it harder for the body to recover.
- ★ Can't control what happens, there are resources available to re-calibrate.
- ★ Important for mind-body system to function in your favor



Reminders for the Holiday Season

1. It's ok to put up boundaries
2. It's your decision how much time to spend and where.
3. Not everyone is going to be on the same page.
4. Have a game plan and exit strategy before any gatherings.



Values & Boundaries

- ★ Setting boundaries for the holidays is important.
- ★ Boundaries are simple statements.
- ★ Get clear on what you value over the holidays.
- ★ When we overcommit our stress levels go way up.

"When we focus on setting healthy boundaries during the holiday season, we are giving ourselves a chance to realign with the true meaning of the season."

Healthy Boundaries

*Yes! You can still set boundaries
during the holidays.*

1. IDENTIFICATION
 - a. Identify the source:
Who do you struggle to establish healthy boundaries with?
2. THE SPECTRUM
 - a. Spectrum from **porous to rigid**
 - b. Goal is to move to the middle
3. COORDINATION
 - a. Boundaries match your values
 - b. Actions match your desires

Struggling to Make Boundaries?

Ask yourself this:

- ★ What am I saying yes to by saying no to this?
- ★ By letting go of this, what am I making space for?
- ★ Why is their comfort more important than my own?
- ★ Is prioritizing my needs selfish or self-care?

Remember: boundaries show others how to respect us and how we show love towards ourselves.



Examples of Boundaries

- ★ I don't have the energy right now, I'll get back to you when I'm feeling stronger.
- ★ I'm not feeling very sociable and need some alone time at the moment.
- ★ I'm struggling at the moment, I need some help, please.
- ★ I am under no obligation to make sense to you.
- ★ Please don't comment on my food portion.
- ★ We will only be able to stay for 3 hours.
- ★ Let's talk when we have more privacy.
- ★ I am uncomfortable right now.
- ★ That wasn't funny, it was offensive.
- ★ I am not coming to that event.



Get Clear On Values



1. What are my top experiences?

Consider:

What brings me joy? What makes me feel fulfilled?

2. What are my suppressed values?

Consider:

When am I most unhappy? What is not being fulfilled in my life?

3. What is my personal code of conduct?

Consider:

What is most important to me? What do I need to experience my highest values?

A Spoonie Holiday: DOs and DON'Ts



DO:

- ★ Acknowledge your feelings
- ★ Reach out
- ★ Be realistic
- ★ Plan ahead (*diet)
- ★ Stick to healthy habits
- ★ Take a breather

DON'T:

- ★ Feel guilty for missing an event
- ★ Let others push your limits
- ★ Give into intrusive questions
- ★ Feel the need to dress up
- ★ Forget to listen to your body

A Spoonie Holiday Toolkit: Soothing Exercises



Self-Soothing Exercise

1. Right hand under left armpit.
2. Left hand hugs right upper arm.
3. Sit and breathe deeply,
4. Until you feel a yawn, sigh, or a swallow.



Heart Warming Exercise

1. **Forehead Release** - Relaxes tension in the forehead and soothes an overactive mind.
2. **Butterfly Hug** - Calming and grounding; lowers stress levels and refocus on present moment awareness.
3. **Heart-Mind Connection** - Supports coherence between heart and mind with loving-kindness, cultivating harmony.

A Spoonie Holiday Toolkit: Meditation & Breathwork

Breathwork

- ★ Square Breathing
- ★ Alternate Nostril Breathing

Mindfulness Meditations

- ★ Deep Breathing
- ★ Body Scan
- ★ Mantra or Prayer
- ★ Walking Meditation



Maintaining
Mindfulness
during the Holidays

Mindful Morning Routine

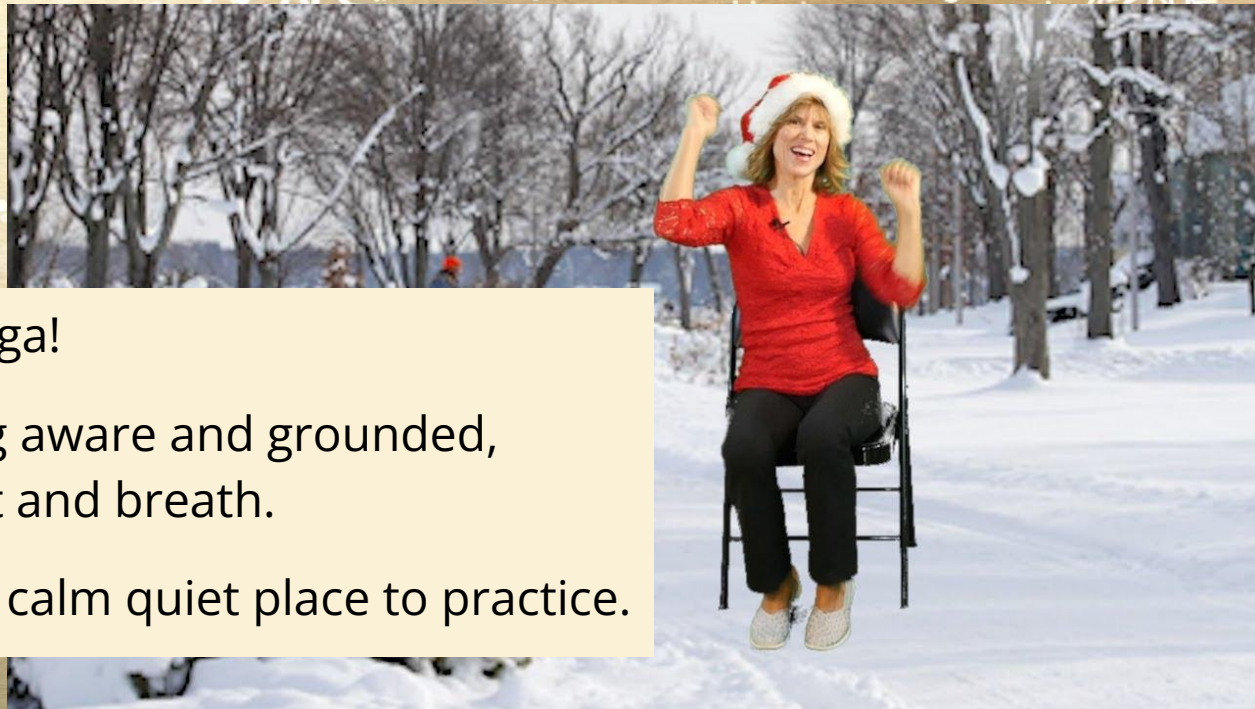
1. Lemon Juice - Mood Booster
2. Meditation - Free & Easy
3. Stretch - Get the Blood Flowing

Chair Yoga for Stress

Time for some chair yoga!

Let's practice becoming aware and grounded, adding fluid movement and breath.

Grab a chair and find a calm quiet place to practice.



Mini Meditation: Yoga Nidra

Let's wind-down with a rejuvenating meditation practice called "Yoga Nidra."



Questions & Resources



- ★ Mindfulness Resources
Guided meditations, accessible yoga and more at ChronicallySurviving.com
- ★ Identify Your Values
[The Barrett Personal Values Assessment](#)