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**Holiday Stress – Is It the Time of Year, or Is It the Time of Man?**

**By Bill Douglas**

Holiday Stress – Is It the Time of Year, or Is It the Time of Man?

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Life seems to compress as the holiday's get closer, and this shows us in no uncertain terms how "intense" our lives have become. Holidays put normal life into hyper-speed, but really our lives in general are now in hyper-speed anyway, which can make the holiday's seem almost unmanageable. However, there is hope, if we can understand the problem.

Research indicating that change is stressful, even good change, explains why the holidays are so stressful, as we are taken out of normal routines and challenged to "perform" in new and abnormal ways during holidays. Furthermore, modern life in general is changing at a mind-numbing pace. So, how do we adapt to change more healthfully? T'ai Chi / Qigong (Chi Kung) tips for loosening your grip on the holidays, and on life in general, include "remembering to breathe."

So, right now, place the tip of your tongue on the roof of your mouth, and then think of relaxing your torso open from the bottom abdominal area to allow the lower lungs to fill with air, observing as they fill up through the top as the upper chest inflates. Good. Now, on the sighing exhale observe your body "relaxing" the breath out from the top of your lungs all the way down to the bottom as your abdominal muscles relax back in . . . fully expending the air from the bottom of the lungs. Repeat this allowing the lungs to fill from the bottom all the way up to the top, and then relaxing the air out of the body from the top of the chest down to the upper pelvic muscles.

Although at first it seem as though the torso muscles work to expand the torso open for air, and then forcing the air out, little by little as you relax open to the breath, every atom of your being relaxes open to be breathed effortlessly. Every muscle in your head, face, shoulders, and torso . . . begins to let go, as though the breath were breathing you, and all you need to do is let go a little more with each sighing exhale.

The tip of the tongue placed on the roof of the mouth allows the breath in more gradually, rather than in one big open throated gush. Studies show this slow, gradual, inhale and exhale oxygenates the body

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much more effectively. As you breathe in the full breaths with the tip of the tongue on the roof of the mouth, your entire being relaxes open to the lightness of air, even the bones, organs, brain and heart. Then as you exhale every atom of your being can "let go" of everything it holds onto to release the loads and burdens of the mind, heart, and body to be exhaled into a healing lightness. You actually expand open with this lightness as an airy feeling of "effortlessness" permeates every tissue and field within and around your body.

This openness feels almost like the wind can blow right through you. Close your eyes so that you can feel internally the deep letting go as the bones themselves begin to release their grip on issues and tensions they may have unconsciously gripped. You will always find the more you let go, the more you can let go. As you approach the holidays or life beyond the holidays, allow your mind to release its expectations and obsessions as they come up. Let the world to flow to you and through you, rather than "reaching out" for outcome, and "holding on" to expectations. Often better opportunities are

coming at us if we can let go of our grip on the past or illusions of the future.

By being "open" we may dream a much greater reality as it occurs, for the holidays and for our lives. By using holiday stress as a catalyst to breathe life and healing light into our clenching bodies, we can carry the promise of the holidays into our greater lives, breathing open to the goodness that waits to fill every aspect of our year and our lives.

You can experience a "Daily Dose of Bliss" by visiting

[www.worldtaichiday.org](http://www.worldtaichiday.org)

and clicking on "Free

Online Lessons" then "Sitting Qigong."

Bill Douglas is the Tai Chi Expert at DrWeil.com, Founder of World T'ai Chi & Qigong Day (held in 50 nations each year), and has authored and co-authored several books including a #1 best selling Tai Chi book "The Complete Idiot's Guide to T'ai Chi & Qigong." Bill's been a Tai Chi source for The Wall Street Journal, New York Times, etc. You can learn more about Tai Chi & Qigong, and also contact Bill Douglas at

<http://www.worldtaichiday.org>

### **Plan To Manage Holiday Stress**

**By ADD Coach Jennifer Koretsky**

Everyone finds themselves stressed out during the holiday season. But for adults with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), November through January can feel like a whirlwind of tasks and responsibilities. Lack of time management will result in undue pressure and overwhelm for the ADD adult.

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One way to take the stress out of the holidays is to plan for them. These simple steps can help the ADD adult manage their time and tasks during the holiday season, thereby relieving unnecessary stress.

Create one hour this week to plan your holiday preparation schedule, and follow these steps:

### Step 1 – Make a List of all the Things You Need to Do to Prepare for the Holiday

This probably includes gift shopping, writing and mailing holiday cards, decorating your home, planning your travel, etc. After you have made this list, put a star next to each of the items that you don't like to do. (Maybe you get bored writing out the holiday cards, or maybe you detest shopping.)

### Step 2 – Use a Calendar or Planner

Use something that gives you ample space to write for each day. This could be a wall calendar, a daily planner, or planning software. Begin by writing in all your holiday appointments, such as parties and scheduled shopping trips. Next, write in all the other activities that you have going on during the month, like meetings and appointments. When you're done, you should have a good idea of where your free time is.

Now, take a look at the items on your holiday to-do list that are not marked with a star, and schedule them in. Do you have a free evening next week in which you can write out your cards? Schedule it on your calendar! Do you have a free Saturday to get your shopping done? Schedule it on your calendar!

### Step 3 – Make the Dreaded Tasks Easier

Take a look at all those tasks you marked with a star. These are the tasks that you hate to do for one reason or another. Take a moment to look at each one, and figure out how to make that task a little easier or more bearable. If you hate writing cards because it's a tedious and boring task, you can make it easier on yourself by inviting a friend over to chat, catch up, and write out cards with you. Hate decorating? Perhaps you can buy a new CD you've been wanting and allow yourself to crank it up while you put up the holiday decorations.

Investing just a small amount of time in planning can save you from undue stress and overwhelm during this holiday season.

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Jennifer Koretsky is an ADD Management Coach who helps adults learn how to manage their ADD and move forward in life. She offers individual and group coaching, workshops, and skill-building programs. Her work has been featured in various media, including The New York Times Magazine. Subscribe to Jennifer's free email newsletter, The ADD Management Guide, by visiting

<http://www.ADDmanagement.com/e-newsletter.htm>

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jennifer@addmanagement.com

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