



GBS HEALTH & WELLNESS

Connect to What Matters

During the holidays people in the United States are much more likely to say they behave in sedentary ways like watching TV, sleeping, eating and drinking to manage their stress. Many individuals engage in comfort eating and other unhealthy behaviors to cope with their stress levels. Use the acronym **M.A.P.** to connect to what matters this holiday season and throughout the year.



Meaning

Start by finding your meaning.

- › Ask yourself: What does the holiday represent to you? What causes you stress during this time? What is realistic? What would make you happy? What is important to you and your family?
- › While finding your meaning, keep in mind what Buddha said; “unless we treat ourselves with love and compassion, we cannot reflect the same on others”.
- › When you start to feel overwhelmed or stressed try this Loving Kindness Meditation - “May I be well. May I be healthy. May I be at peace.”

Awareness

Once you find your meaning, it's time to create awareness.

- › Financial stress increases greatly during the holidays. Gather all family members involved in financial decisions and create a comfortable, realistic budget to reduce spend and stress.
- › Plan events and tasks in advance by creating a family calendar. Start by listing out all the events and tasks for the holiday season. Once you have your list, delegate tasks and cut back on events that don't bring happiness. It is okay to say no!
- › Recognize the things that may bring heaviness to your holidays, such as family dynamics and loss. Have compassion for yourself and others. Practice self-care, non-judgement, and kindness. Don't forget to celebrate what is most important and allow differing opinions to be put on hold.

Purpose

Lastly, define your purpose.

- › Design your gift-giving around your purpose. Instead of giving material items, try giving the gift of time, giving, or experiences. These gifts often have more meaning and leave a lasting impression on the recipient and the giver.
- › Give yourself permission to not do everything! This time of year, events and tasks can add up. Narrow down your obligations to those that bring you and your loved ones the most joy.
- › Try to incorporate or maintain healthy lifestyle habits. It's okay to indulge, but it is also important to practice and nurture healthy habits. Find a balance by being mindful, make some healthier alternatives, have healthy snacks to reduce overeating, or carve out time to exercise.
- › Practice self-care by having a relaxing night at home, snuggling a loved one or pet, getting a massage, meditating, or engaging in breathing practices. There are so many ways you can practice self-care, take the time to find what works best for you.

Breathing Exercises

Try out these easy to remember breathing exercises as a form of self-care or to reduce stress and anxiety. Choose the one that works best for you and incorporate it into your day!

4 - 7 - 8

Inhale for 4

Hold for 7

Exhale for 8

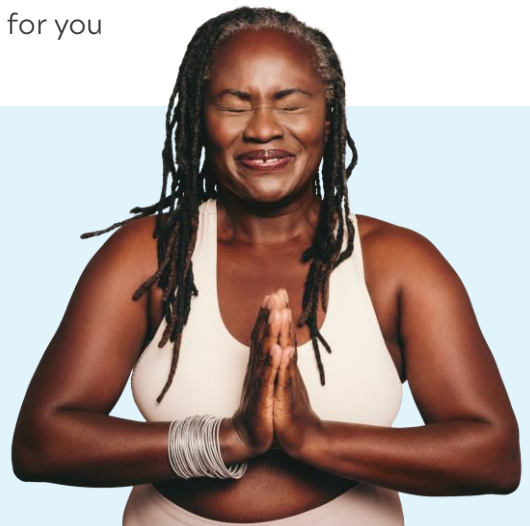
4 - 4 - 4 - 4

Inhale for 4

Hold for 4

Exhale for 4

Hold for 4



* Each number refers to seconds.