

## Dissipating stress

Esprit Yoga | Sep. - Oct. 2017 | Published in paper edition n°39

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**One of the main sources of stress is the feeling of not being able to control your time.  
Here is a sequence that will help you let go and set aside some time to decompress.**

Marion, in her forties, arrives in a panic and late for her first consultation: “I'm really sorry, but you know how it is in Paris, and I still haven't found a parking space...”. After creating her file, five minutes passed and she has calmed down. Without being begged, she describes her symptoms to me: “I haven't been sleeping well for a few months now, I wake up, I'm out of breath, my heart pounds on a regular basis, I have pain in my shoulders and neck. From time to time I have stomach aches with attacks of urinary burns. I feel like I'm completely out of control... I'm stressed.” The word is dropped. Indeed, Marion listed almost all the ailments that one can have because of stress. She tells me that she has been feeling this way since her husband, who has been sent abroad, is only here a few days a month and she has to provide for the education of her two daughters, aged 11 and 13, who are entering adolescence. “And it's not simple!” she confides to me with a broad sigh. “Not to mention my job, which is a challenge for me at the moment, because we have opened a new sector without having recruited, because of the uncertain situation.”

One of the main sources of stress is the feeling of not being able to control your time. You feel overwhelmed by events and you feel like you never have enough time. I explain to Marion that yoga can be a great way for her to regain control of her time. She needs to light a “backfire” so that she doesn't get carried away by this avalanche. She needs to be able to open up a small space-time for herself, with a short daily practice. I anticipate the objection of lack of time by explaining to her: “Tell yourself that this time you will devote to practice will make you ten times more efficient. Because the more you have these sleep disorders, these multiple pains, the poorer you will feel and the less you will be able to do. The paradox is that the more you take your time, the less you will lose it!” “Yes, but then how to do it?”, she lets go, lowering her shoulders and head, as if she were collapsing.

First of all I tell her to take a deep breath, to hold the breath, to settle into her chest, welcoming the air pleasantly into her torso. Then I invite her to exhale widely, slowly, imagining that her chest deflates like a balloon that empties itself of all tension. After two or three such breaths, Marion feels more relaxed. “I feel it's flowing better. It's more fluid...” she tells me in a calmer voice.

I show her how to practice the cat posture (Marjarasana) explaining that this exercise will balance the two sides of the neurovegetative system. The sympathetic on the inhale, in extension, and the parasympathetic on the exhale, in flexion. The organism needs to “unplug”, to recharge its batteries. Then I have her lie on her back for the half-bridge posture (Ardha Setu Bandha) to relax the whole trapezius region, where stress and pain are concentrated; to stretch the solar plexus, where emotional tension is concentrated; to invert and strengthen the digestive tract and to strengthen the deep musculature of the spine.

At the end of the consultation, Marion sits in a lotus position and I guide her in a small meditation that she records on her phone. A visualization that combines breathing and soothing in the present moment, with a sankalpa adapted to her stress: "I have the right to take my time". This will be her little antidote to counteract the acceleration of her time.

## The practice

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### Deep breathing with breath retention

Adjust your posture, straighten up. Breathe in deeply and hold your breath. Stay long enough to "distribute" the air in the chest. Breathe out slowly. Repeat three more times



### Marjarasana - Cat pose

Get down on all fours, then, as you breathe in, dig into your back. The movement starts from the pelvis, which carries the spine to the cervical vertebrae (photo 1). Breathe out, rounding your back, in a movement that starts from the back of the neck and spreads to the sacrum (photo 2). Feel the fluidity of your back moving like a wave. Repeat several times.



### Ardha Setu Bandha - Half-bridge

Lie down on the floor with your heels close to your buttocks. Hands flat, arms at your sides (photo 3). Inhale while raising your buttocks and pelvis as high as possible (photo 4). Exhale by placing your back on the floor, vertebra by vertebra. Do the exercise dynamically three more times. Then stay in the posture as long as it is comfortable for you, while breathing. Become aware of the stretching of the neck, the chin reorgement, the opening of the pelvis, the support of the feet on the ground. Then come back slowly.



## **Meditation**

Sit with your back straight and your eyes closed; concentrate on the stability and solidity of your base (photo 5). Become aware of gentle, light breathing. Breathe in, imagining all the tensions of the body coming together in the chest. Exhale as you imagine all the tensions coming out through your nostrils. Inhale as you imagine a serene, luminous and pure sky. Breathe out this transparent light throughout the body. Repeat the exercise

several times. Then stay bathed in the light. Inhale deeply and as you exhale, mentally repeat to yourself: "I have the right to take my time" or "I have the right to take breaks."

## **Complementary care**

To reinforce your ability to adapt to stress, you can take, on a daily basis, an "adaptive" plant such as Rhodiola Roséa (200 to 500 mg of extract). It reinforces the production of dopamine and noradrenaline as well as serotonin. You can also take a daily dose of magnesium, in the necessary quantity, that is from 350mg to 450mg per day.