

Reduce Stress and Maximize Romance this Winter



By Lindsay Kriger

During the hectic holiday season, it's easy for stress levels to rise, which can sometimes equal the downfall of romance and intimacy.

To ensure you and your sweetie don't turn sour on each other, here are some of my personal tips for relaxation that you and your partner can practice to help keep you breathing easy this season:

- 1. Devote a little time to indulging in like-no-one's-watching fun.**

Newlyweds Nikki Reed and Paul McDonald are known for loving to hit the dance floor. They've been seen together at many a club cutting a rug. That said, it's time to take their lead and relax with your mate by going out dancing. You'll not only enjoy an intimate evening due to sensual physical contact, you'll also melt away stress and raise your serotonin levels with all that great exercise. And you'll burn lots of calories to boot – by shaking your booties!

2. Share spiked hot cocoa by a fireplace.

If no fireplace is at the ready, light lots and lots of candles. Bring some blankets into the mix. A touch of quiet flame-lit togetherness will soothe your addled nerves, and it's has been known to seriously soften the mood.

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3. Get outdoors with your sweetheart.

Take a cue from lovebirds Ryan Gosling and Eva Mendes, who were recently photographed strolling around Paris hand-in-hand. Even if Paris isn't in the cards this winter, getting outside and breathing in some chilly fresh air might be an invigorating and rejuvenating move. Leaving your phone at home, put on your coats, hold hands and walk together – even if it's just around your own neighborhood. It'll enable you to devote time to connecting, talking and truly listening to one another – all of which are essential steps to strengthening your bond.

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4. If it's too cold to venture outside, stay in and cook together.

Learn how to bake apple pie from scratch. Rolling and punching dough is fantastic stress relief – plus it's kind of sexy. Also, studies have shown vanilla and cinnamon to be

some of the ultimate aphrodisiac scents, so be sure to mix lots of these flavors into your recipe.

5. Take a hot bubble bath together.

While you're at this indoor-activity stuff, since the weather is foul, climb in a hot bubbly bath together. Lots of delicious-smelling products and lots of physical intimacy are your ticket to a stress-free night. It's like a free couples' therapy session.

6. Do yoga – and strrrreetttttccchhh the stress out of your body.

On your own, yoga is great for your mind and body and can really help reduce the anxieties of everyday life. Bringing your partner into the experience is great, too, as it adds in a touch of sensuality. After all, it's always wonderful to have the opportunity to touch and be touched by your partner.

As you each help the other to move your bodies in new ways, it might even give you new ideas for how to move your bodies once you're off that yoga mat. Yep, a few good downward-facing dogs and you may both find yourselves feeling refreshed and energized for romance in no time!

Lindsay Kriger is a New York University grad with a B.A. in Psychology. She has trained with the PAX Mastership and Leadership Program, taught by internationally recognized Relationship Expert Alison Armstrong, and at 22 is the program's youngest trainee to date.