

# ZEN OF CRISIS KIT -

3 Practices

## Module 1: Introduction

Stop Feeling Like a Victim & Deal with Stress in 20 Min

By Kala Viv Williams

Kala Viv Williams has been featured in:

**SELF**

yoga  
JOURNAL

**ESSENCE**  
*fierce, fun and fabulous!*

magazines.

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If you would like more help with integrating these tools into daily life, consider booking a phone consult with me. This page of my website gives more info:

<http://yogablissdance.com/contact-info-for-private-yoga-instructor-nyc-corporate-yoga-nyc/>

## Module 1: Stop Feeling Like a Victim & Deal with Stress

*A young girl aged six, asked her mamma to tell her what she did at the university where she went every day. "I am in the art department. I teach people how to draw and paint," replied her mother. Astonished, the girl inquired, "You mean they forget?"<sup>1</sup>*

This is a perfect quote to show the lack of self-assurance we can find ourselves with, expressed through the innocence of a child. It appealed to me especially as I used to be an art professor! That is where I experienced the tremendous stress that ultimately led to the creation of this kit for you. I have been there with anxiety, stress and depression. I drew on that experience and my certifications in yoga, and mindfulness training to create the *Zen of Crisis* for you.

But first- don't forget your true nature: which is eternal, bliss, peace and awareness-absolute. I really believe times of great stress are a calling to us to **grow and awaken** to our best qualities that will emerge from the ordeal-whatever it is.

**Goals:** There are specific skills that can help us cope and even thrive. This product is aimed at a specific issue: To help you to feel less like a victim- calmer and able to think more clearly about your best way forward. Each techniques can been done in 20-30 min and will enable you to cope with feelings of stress and anxiety, poor sleep and all the other physical and mental/emotional ways stress shows up.

**What this program is not:** it does not give legal advice, it does not give psychological advice and it doesn't tell you what to do.

**What it will do:** give you tools that will strengthen you to face the life challenges: health, family emergency, money problems, workplace stress. It will provide a foundation-if *practiced regularly* from which you can make **more confident decisions about your life and how to go forward**. I've been through it myself and my [holistic wellness background](#) led me to create this program to help others. Always consult a

trained professional, whether therapist or physician if you are unsure if any activity is appropriate for you.

## STRESS:

Stress is a part of life. Mild forms of stress provide stimulation and motivation in our lives. But people differ dramatically in what they interpret as stressful events, and in their responses. So although stress is triggered by outside events, it's the way we personally (for a variety of reasons,) interpret and react. This is not to blame anyone but to say that the control of stress can be internal! **That's good news!** Or you would truly be helpless and a victim. But the one life constant is change-this allows for improvement and betterment of a situation with the proper tools.



3. When do I have the most time- 20 min or so to do a stress relieving activity?

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat

ACUTE STRESS-FAIRLY ACTIVE

*“To allow oneself to be carried away by a multitude of conflicting concerns, to surrender to too many demands, to commit to too many projects, to want to help everyone in everything is itself to succumb to the violence of our times.” ~Thomas Merton, influential monk, activist and writer*

4. If I trouble finding time 3-4x a week, is there an activity or commitment I can cut out, even if temporarily, in order to make time?

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3. Is there some type of movement I used to love, even as a child that I could restart?

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## EXERCISE/MOVEMENT

**Why it's good:** Aerobic activity matches your level of "rajas"- rajas means activity, movement, from the Ayurvedic tradition (the thousands years old medical tradition of India.) Also western science has proven that exercise, any kind that gets body moving and the blood moving can help with mild depression. Remember when in doubt to check with a competent health professional before beginning an exercise program.

Suggestions:

- ◆ Walking in Nature-proven more relaxing than walking inside. Nature has balancing or "sattvic" effect.
- ◆ Cycling
- ◆ Stair Climbing-easy to do even at work or at home if you work in multi-story building.
- ◆ Take a yoga class appropriate to your level, especially recommended are gentle or "restorative" yoga classes (which are two different things.)
- ◆ Or if you prefer something more vigorous, explain your needs and speak with the yoga teacher first and check with your doctor before starting a new physical activity. If already a yoga practitioner the progressive muscle relaxation audio in this kit is a nice way to end your practice.
- ◆ Dance-put on positive, upbeat music at home and move your body.

### MODERATELY STRESS-Less Active

No acute stress happened or time has passed, you are not in an extreme state. You can of course still do the activities from the higher level of stress. For instance if you've taken up bike riding that's great continue! Just moderate it to your needs.

1. Where do I have a private, comfortable, quiet space to do walking meditation?  
Basement, upstairs hallway, sun-room?

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#### ◆ **Guided Audio WALKING MEDITATION**

**Why it's good:** Walking meditation works great because you are moving your body *while* getting the focus of meditation. It's perfect when you feel a bit too keyed up to do other practices like seated meditation. The latter is very hard to do when we are agitated and can lead to feelings of frustration (I'll cover other types of meditation in the upcoming

modules of Zen of Crisis.) So, this is an ancient form of meditation in the Buddhist and various contemplative traditions.

## 2. WALKING MEDITATION:

### NEEDED:

- ◆ Clear space: where you can take about 15-20 steps in **straight line**. Too long a path and the mind will wander off.
- ◆ It's easiest at first and highly recommended to do this *inside*. The sounds and movements of nature will tend to naturally distract your focus. Note: this is different than going for a walk, it is more contemplative. You will see the difference with practice.

### PREP:

- ◆ Best: Set timer for 5-8 min segments that will beep for each of the 3 cycles. I highly recommend getting an online digital timer-for your computer. That's what I do. Find one listed in *resources*.

### TECHNIQUE:

Tip: Don't stress about being precise on the time of each segment if you don't have a timer- just use a clock for the end time. Divide whatever time you have into approximately 3 segments.

Introductory Breathing: Take 3-5 deep breaths before you begin walking. Standing at one end of your walking space.

**First cycle:** Begin by walking a bit slower than your normal pace. Saying: *left, right...*mentally as you lift each foot. Pause at the end of the path, take 1 deep breath and turn slowly. Pause, take another deep breath before starting to walk back each time. Do for 1/3 of the total time you have set aside.

- ◆ Focus on the sensations in you leg and foot as you move it.

**Second cycle:** Slower walking pace than in 1<sup>st</sup> cycle. Saying mentally: *Lifting, Dropping* mentally, as you move *each* foot. You are breaking each step now into 2 phases of awareness. Continue for a 1/3 of the allotted time.

- ◆ Focus on the sensations in you leg and foot even more closely as you move it.

**Third cycle:** *Slow the walking pace even more*, microscopically slow. You would be moving at the pace of a sick or very elderly person. Saying mentally: *Lifting.... Moving.... Dropping* for each phase of the foot. You are now breaking each step of each foot-into 3 phases of awareness. The sensations of lifting as the foot raises in the air, the sensation of gliding through the air and the sensations of lowering foot to the floor.



- ◆ Focus on the sensations in your leg and foot as you move it. Try to feel each phase of lifting up the foot, moving it forward, and lowering it and the sensations.

**Tip on Agitation:** If you notice you feel agitated walking so slowly then quicken the pace to moderate or normal walking again. Over time and with regular practice aim to end by walking very, very slowly. The guided audio will give you the idea!

**Tip on Thoughts:** Don't give attention to your thoughts that may pop into the mind (this is normal) bring yourself back to the sensations of motion of your feet and legs. See more advanced for more guidelines.

It's also normal to feel bored, try to drop back into the body sensations. And release any self-judgement.

**To Transition at the end:** Stand for 5 breaths or so. Feel your entire body from head to feet, relax. If you like bring palms together at the center of the chest, lower head slightly while lifting the chest. End with a positive phrase of thanks and self-appreciation.

### Walking Meditation Advanced Tips:

- ◆ Try to note and feel more precisely. So when you get to the end of the path each time and are just standing mentally note: *standing, standing*. And when beginning to turn to start walking again-begin noting: *turning, turning*.
- ◆ If a really strong emotion arises or one realizes the mind is off on a story (memory, planning etc.) then stop walking and:
- ◆ Thoughts/emotions: rather than just bring ourselves back to the movement of the foot, if strong emotion arises noting mentally the feeling, like "sadness, sadness" or "anger, anger..." So we are not suppressing anything. When the emotion or thought subsides go back to walking as before.

So more advanced is to be aware of whatever is arising, but the **primary focus** of walking meditation is on the steps and the sensations in the leg and foot-as a point of clarity.

Two techniques:

Progressive Muscle Relaxation and 3 Part Yogic Deep Breath.

**Why it's good:** Progressive Muscle Relaxation is wonderful to help us decrease the level of physical tension in the body. And the physical tension has a profound effect and vice versa on our level of mental tension. It's especially nice to do before the 3 part breath practice as it preps you to be deeply relaxed to then pay attention to the finer sensations of the breath.

**Why it's good:** 3 Part Yogic Deep Breath is fantastic for calming the nervous system directly. It's easiest if the body is relaxed (like from doing the muscle relaxation.) Or if one has done some other calming activity like a walk or yoga.

**Benefits:** These two practices will with regular practice help to *calm the mind, lower the blood pressure and heart rate.*

◆ **Guided Audio- Progressive Muscle Relaxation**

1. For the following two practices, where do I have a clean, comfortable quiet space to lay down comfortably that is not on a bed?

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### 3. PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION

NEEDED:

- ◆ A flat comfortable surface-like a carpeted floor. A bed is not ideal as it's associated with sleeping. You want to be **aware** of the feeling of deep relaxation which is impossible if you are asleep. It seems like a paradox but the ideal state *is aware yet deeply relaxed*. If after a few times you choose to use it for insomnia that's fine. The power of the technique is that it's teaching you how to feel deeply relaxed while awake.
- ◆ Comfortable: low lighting, comfortable temperature or get a blanket. Perhaps a pillow for your head.

- ◆ Timer. Or clock radio ideally set to alarm with calming music not abrupt beep.
- ◆ Tip: if you have any low back discomfort when laying flat, take a blanket fold in half lengthwise, and then roll it up so it forms a roll of 8-12 inches or so. Place that under your knees, and relax your legs over it.PREP:
- ◆ Put “do not disturb” sign on doorknob of room, or let others know not to disturb you. This is important-- as you won’t relax deeply if there is worry of being interrupted by kids or roommates.
- ◆ Turn off all sound sources i.e. cell phones, alarms etc. Outside sounds out of your control are fine. You will find that with more practice they “disappear.”
- ◆ Remove watches or belts and shoes. You want to be comfortable.

#### TECHNIQUE:

Read through this so you have some idea, but you will enjoy and want to use **the guided audio**.

Position: Lay down on a flat surface. Feet hip distance apart. Palms up, hands 1-2 feet away from side of your body. Head centered, perhaps resting on a low pillow for comfort if needed.

- ◆ **LEGS:** Flex your feet toes pulled back heel thrust forward. Tighten thighs. **Inhale hold that deep breath (HB) in, for 5 seconds or so. EXHALE and relax completely. Pause and feel after each tensing, that’s key!**
- ◆ **BUTTOCKS/LOWER BACK:** Tighten buttocks, press lower back down to floor. HB. Then EXHALE. Relax...
- ◆ **CHEST:** Deep breath in, feel tension in ribs and chest. HB. EXHALE. Relax....
- ◆ **ARMS/SHOULDERS:** Inhale-make fist with hands, arm straight. Squeeze shoulders up to ears. HB. Suddenly EXHALE. Make sure to pull shoulders back down away from ears. Relax...
- ◆ **FACE/NECK:** Inhale, press back of head into floor, make a prune face. So neck and face are tense. HB. EXHALE. Relax.....

Take 3-5 deep breaths, feel whole body relaxed...Now we will go back through the body at a deeper level. Without any movement or tensing this time. Technique now is to simply sense all sensations occurring in each part of your body-systematically.

- ◆ LEGS: Feel your toes, soles of feet, top of feet, ankles...Pause between each area. Feel your calves, knees...thighs. Notice all sensations such as warmth cool, tingling, pulsing, throbbing, burning whatever you notice is perfect.
- ◆ TORSO: Bring awareness to the buttocks-notice sensations. Feel hips, pelvis....belly...chest. Pause at each area. Middle and upper back...
- ◆ ARMS/SHOULDERS: Feel your fingers, try to feel each one, hands, wrists, forearms, elbows. Feel upper arms... feel shoulders, all the sensations without any judgement or reaction.
- ◆ FACE/NECK: Feel neck, throat....back of neck, jaw, cheeks mouth. Feel eyes, around eyes...forehead, temples, even your scalp.

Take 3-5 deep breaths, feel your entire body deeply relaxed. Stay in like this deeply aware of the body from feet out to hands to top of head and feel however it manifests-the depth of relaxation.

**Transition:** When quiet timer goes off, circle ankles, wrists, stretch arms overhead while pointing or flexing feet. Bend knees, hug thighs up to belly, wrap arms around legs. Roll to one side-pause. When ready to sit up use arms and hands to push up to sitting.

Pause before going on to daily activities.

◆ **Guided Audio-Yogic Deep Breath**

4. YOGIC 3-PART BREATH PRACTICE

**NEEDED:** SAME AS #3 above.

**PREP:** SAME AS #3 above.

**TECHNIQUE:**

Position: Lay down on a flat surface like a carpeted floor. Feet hip distance apart. Palms up, hands 1-2 feet away from side of your body. Head centered, perhaps resting on a low pillow for comfort.

- ◆ Take 3-5 deep breaths. Mentally say to yourself “relax.” Feel the weight of your body, the contact points touching the floor. Let go...
- ◆ 1<sup>st</sup>: Bring hands onto abdomen. Take deep breath through the nose, so that you feel: Belly rise on inhale. Exhale> belly drops in. Repeat. Inhale abdomen lifts like a balloon filling up. Exhale> abdomen drops down. Repeat 10x at least.
- ◆ 2<sup>nd</sup> pt: Bring hands up to ribcage. Keep arms relaxed, elbows resting on the ground if possible. Continue belly breathing but now adding-**expansion of ribs**. Now Inhale> feel belly rise, and >feel ribs expand out> exhale belly drops, ribs shrink back in. 10x or more....
- ◆ 3<sup>rd</sup> pt: Bring hands up to just below collar bones, on upper chest. Keep arms relaxed, elbows resting on the ground if possible. Continue taking deep breaths like pt 1 & 2. But now add the awareness of slight lift in the upper chest area. So feeling the breath fill from bottom, middle and top of lungs.... 10x or more.
- ◆ Let hands shift to resting on the ground, away from your sides, palms up, arms relaxed.
- ◆ Feel and continue to take the full 3part breath, in a relaxed, easy manner, for as long as you like.
- ◆ Notice the two ways to exhale mentioned on the tape-try both see which feels best: from bottom to top or emptying for top to bottom. The feeling of each is slightly different.

To transition:

Circle wrists and ankles. Stretch arms overhead, inhale deeply stretch whole body while pointing or flexing the feet. Bend knees up, hug thighs up to the belly by wrapping arms around legs. Roll onto your side-(do not jerk up to sitting) take a few breaths curled in side-lying position. Then using arms prop up on your elbow and push yourself up to sitting.

Pause before resuming your day.

## CONCLUSION:

You will find that one or the other practice really works for you-has a very beneficial effect on your stress level. Feel free to focus on that practice.

### Final Tips:

- ◆ Practice daily for 20 min if at all possible. If not try for 3-4x a week.
- ◆ Combining the “progressive muscle relaxation” first and then the “3 part breath” will have an especially profoundly relaxing effect. Try it if you have time. Each can of course be done separately.

And do follow my blog <http://yogablissdance.com> and if you haven't already, join my Email list to receive [YogaBlissDance.com](http://YogaBlissDance.com) newsletter which has exclusive content, de-stress tips and new products & programs, announced first. Zen of Crisis is planned to include more modules, each separate and complete. Mod. 2 & 3 will introduce new practices.

Truly best wishes to you on your healing journey!

*Kala Viv Williams*

## RESOURCES:

### Timers:

To time ones walking meditation practice. Lists various chimes, bells (most free) etc. that one can download to use on computer. Or use an app from your phone.

<http://www.insightmeditationcenter.org/meditation-timers/>

### Magazines:

[Natural Health Magazine](#)

[Yoga Journal](#)

[Yoga International](#)

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