



YOUR CHRISTMAS SANITY MASK

How to 'take a moment' when the sprouts are burning, the children are fighting over the crackers and your father-in-law's criticising your gravy again...

- 1 Cut out your sanity mask and thread with ribbon from one of your pressesies.
- 2 Retire to the garden/bedroom/shed – wherever you can get a bit of peace.
- 3 Don mask.
- 4 Practise MBSR: 'Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction simply involves bringing your awareness to the present and becoming absorbed in the sounds, textures, colours and

smells of your environment,' says neuroscientist Shanida Nataraja. 'It's a way of stilling the chaos of the mind.' Like other forms of meditation, it trains you to use both the left (rational) and right (creative) sides of your brain, reduces stress, lowers blood pressure and boosts blood oxygen, giving you a healthy glow. 'It also gives you increased acceptance, so you're happier with your life, and less judgmental of others,' Nataraja explains. Perhaps you should get your father-in-law to try it.

The Blissful Brain by Dr Shanida Nataraja (£7.99, Gaia Books) will be published in March 2008. Pre-order it from www.amazon.co.uk.

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