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## Changing Lanes

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After a relaxing summer, somehow the first weeks of September feel like a merge onto the Autobahn -- going from zero to 90 in seconds. Work gets busier... traffic gets worse... kids' activities rev up... holiday planning starts. Phew!

One key to meeting the challenges of life in the fast lane lies in being sure that the energy in your body is flowing smoothly. Adair Wilson Heitmann, director of the Center for Creativity and Wellness in Fairfield, Connecticut, works with individuals to help them better manage their lives, including their stress levels. She explains that stress, whether it comes from ordinary life events or trauma, causes the body's *chi* energies (its principal energies) to become out of balance or even blocked rather than flowing smoothly as they should. She helps her clients keep their energy in check between appointments with some simple do-it-yourself techniques. I tried them. They're remarkably effective!

### EXERCISE 1 -- WRAP IT

To quickly release tension, Heitmann advises a strategy that comes from the Japanese healing art called *jin shin jyustu*, which is the basis of acupressure, acupuncture and massage techniques that use pressure points. While it's best to do this in a restful place where you can shut your eyes, it's not necessary. Heitmann says you can do it any time you're feeling out of balance. It's especially good for nervous airplane travelers.

***Here's what you do:*** Wrap your entire right hand around your left thumb, as if your hand were a tortilla wrapping the thumb. Hold that for one to five minutes, and then alternate left hand on right thumb. Go through each of your fingers this way, always alternating hands. The energy flow through each of the fingers has a particular

association -- the thumb with worry... the index finger with fear... the middle finger with anger... the ring finger with grief... and the pinky with pretense or façade. Although this method is excellent for releasing tension in general, if you are experiencing one of these aspects in particular, you can hold the corresponding digits of each hand, alternating style, to find relief.

## EXERCISE # 2 -- SIT ON IT

Another tactic that will help you relieve stress is literally to sit on your hands. Place your hands palms down under your sitz bones (the ends of your pelvic bone that you can feel in your bottom) and hold this position for a few minutes. You'll find this helpful anytime, whether you are at your office or your dining room table. It takes just a few minutes to ease your stress, but the longer you can sit on your hands, says Heitmann, the more grounded you'll feel.

## OTHER OPTIONS

While driving, you can relieve the stress that comes with it by making use of stop signs. When you come upon one, as you brake, exhale and say, "I breathe out peace." While you are stopped, inhale and say, "I breathe in peace." You also can do this in traffic when there's no stop sign nearby just by chanting to your breathing.

Music is also an excellent stress soother, says Heitmann, whether through a CD player in the car or headsets during a flight.

Another way to ease the stress that's involved with travel: Heitmann recommends using liquid flower essences for several days before you leave and during your trip. Two good ones are Bach's Rescue Remedy ([www.bachcentre.com](http://www.bachcentre.com)) or Travel Ease (Alaskan Flower Essence Project) ([www.alaskaessences.com](http://www.alaskaessences.com)). *Caution:* The flowers in Rescue Remedy are preserved in a brandy-type liquid, making it off-limits to alcoholics.

The granddaddy tool of stress relief, though, says Heitmann, is meditation. While that isn't surprising, she has advice that pertains specifically to people in Western cultures. Because Westerners find it difficult simply to sit still, we benefit from having a number of types of meditation available, including those that engage the cognitive mind with chants or breathing routines. These make it easier for Westerners to relax into deeper meditation. Heitmann finds that people do best trying out several different methods (which can be found in books or through local classes). Start by fitting in just five

minutes a day of meditation. Adopt the meditation schedule and technique that slips most efficiently into your day.

Whether it's meditation or some quick-fix balancers, getting your energy in check can make a big difference when it really counts.  
*Ohmm.*

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#### Source

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