Yoga is not just for life, it's for Christmas too!

By Andy Roughton

You hardly need me to remind you that the festive period is upon us once again, and for many of us that means eating and drinking too much and slouching in front of the TV for hours on end.

The celebrations can help to bring our families and friends closer together and this aim is not incompatible with the philosophies of yoga. What we do need to ensure is that these celebrations do not harm are bodies and minds, and a good way to combat the negative aspects of Christmas is to practice yoga. As the wise old Indian sage Patanjali says "Pains that have yet to come can be and should be avoided".

So, why not use the Christmas period to deepen your practice? For example, if you are staying with relatives, resist the urge to sit down in front of yet another showing of *The Wizard of Oz* and find a quiet space where you can practice yoga by yourself. Your absence will be appreciated when you return refreshed – and ready for another game of Trivial Pursuit.

To combat the ill effects of sitting for too long on a saggy old sofa, try something I do all the time while watching TV. Sit yourself in Baddha Konasana or simple Sukhasana on the floor with your back supported against a chair, sofa or wall. You can also try stretching your back by doing half Uttanasana against a wall or table.

Remember: while you indulge the spirit of the holiday period don't forget to be kind to yourself too.