

# Self-regulation practices

## Breathing Exercise

Tune in to how you're feeling in your mind and body. Take a deep breath in through your nose while counting to 4. Breathe out through your mouth for the count of 6. Crunch your tummy muscles to release the last bit of air and tension from your lungs. Repeat.

## Self-calming

Put your right hand on your heart and your left hand on your forehead. Close your eyes and breathe in. Breathe out and release the tension in your body. Feel yourself become calm.

## Self-hug

Put your right hand under your left armpit (near your heart) and your left hand over your right shoulder. Give yourself a firm hug and breathe deeply.

## The Five Senses

Use your five fingers for each of the senses. Bring your curiosity and focus to each of your senses one by one. This brings you're your thinking brain (frontal lobes) and your feeling brain (limbic system) together.

1. Thumb: smell
2. Index finger: feel
3. Middle finger: taste
4. Ring finger: hear
5. Little finger: see

## Humming

Take deep breaths in and hum as you let each breath out. Repeat for one to two minutes. Humming vibrates your lips, mouth and throat. It helps regulate and deepen breathing, balancing the autonomic nervous system, which makes us feel calm. Deep humming and chanting are the only things that massage our hearts.

## Swaying

Stand up, place your feet apart just under your hips and bend your knees a little. Now move your weight gently from side to side. This helps calms your system and gets rid of nervous energy.

## Leg shaking

A simple way to move big muscle groups, get rid of nervous energy and release stress hormones is to shake your legs.

## Foot and breath

Sit or stand with your feet flat on the floor. Breathe in and push your right foot into the floor at the same time. Breathe out and release that foot from the floor. Let the foot relax. Breathe in and push your left foot into the floor. Breathe out and release. Do that for three or four times. Remember to feel the pressure and the relaxation each time.

### **Clicking – after a stressful situation**

Breathe deeply. Think to yourself “I did the best I could in that moment, and I can move on, heal and learn from that experience.” Click your fingers from left to right, right to left. Feel the rhythm. Let your body move. Breathe in and out, nice and slow.

This shifts your focus between the left and right brain. The movement activates big muscle groups. Counting and concentrating on the rhythm activates your thinking brain (frontal lobes). It also releases stress hormones.

### **Grounding Exercise**

Stand with your feet under your hips, central and balanced. Relax your hands by your side. Breathe in and lean as far forward as you can without falling over. Hold. Feel the strain on your body. Breathe out, come back to centre. Repeat. Breathe in, move to your right, keeping your left foot on the ground, lean as far as you can without falling. Hold. Breathe out, come back to centre. Repeat. Breathe in, move to your left, keeping your right foot on the ground. Hold. Breathe out, back to centre. Repeat. Give your body a bit of a shake.

### **Guided Body Scan and Check-in**

Get comfortable, put your feet on the ground, close your eyes. Think about your feet. Feel the soles of your feet. Imagine there are roots growing out of the soles of your feet. Feel the roots pushing their way through the floor, through the concrete slab into the ground and into the earth. Pushing all the way down to the water table, where they get sustenance as you sit and relax. Wiggle your toes. Relax your toes, feet, ankles, calves. Let your knees fall out slightly. Relax the muscles in your thighs. Sink into the chair. Relax your hips. Focus on your tummy. Notice the feeling, then let it go and relax. Breathe in deeply then relax your chest. Gently draw your shoulders away from your ears and relax your shoulders. Move your fingers, release away any tension. Relax your fingers and put your hands on your lap. Let your arms grow heavy, relax your back, neck, jaw, cheeks and let your eyelids get heavy. Relax the muscles between your eyebrows. Relax your scalp. Imagine there's a string tied to the crown of your head that someone is gently pulling, stretching your spine. As you pull your head up, your chin tucks in, your tummy tucks in. Your blood rushes in and renews your whole nervous system. Breathe in deeply, then breathe out. Move a little. Come back to the room. Open your eyes. How do you feel? Where do you feel it in your body? What feeling word would you use to describe it?