



# Regulation techniques Workbook

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**“Implicit memory is the body’s collection of unconscious ‘programs’ which trigger automatic behaviour. In order to see lasting change, we have to work on the level of the body.**

**With consistent practice, we can carve out new neural pathways that can eventually become our new normal.**

**We have to re-write the old programs to support the kinds of behavior we want to uphold.”**

**Trauma and Somatics**



# Before the exercises

These exercises work the best when done consistently over time. I suggest picking 2-3 exercises and doing them daily for a couple of weeks.

You can then continue with the same exercises or try something new. Following your body, and what it needs in that period of time. By doing them consistently you'll gain the deepest level of restoration & release.

Before starting each exercise take a moment to check in with your body.

Noticing:

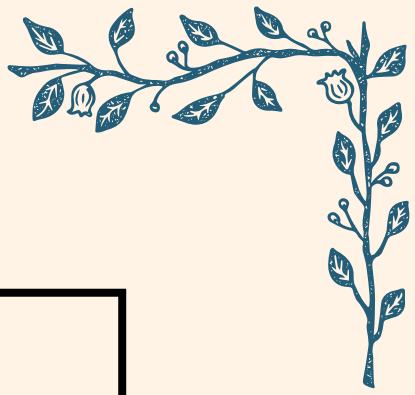
- How your body feels
- Any emotions that might be present
- Do you feel connected to your body?
- How is your breath? Your heart?
- What do you notice here in this moment?

And then check in after the exercises - taking note of any shifts or changes. You can record the changes in your journal or on the note page next.



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# Notes & reflections



Day	Exercise	Observations



# Body Scan



Disconnecting from our body is one of the most common signs of survival mode. Getting back in touch with our physical self can allow us to feel safe again.

Step 1: Ask yourself: Can I feel my body?

Step 2: Starting with your toes, scan your body slowly upwards, paying attention & asking yourself if you can feel each part of your body - your knees, your arms, your elbows...

Step 3: Once you reach your head, ask yourself again: Can I feel my body?

Repeat until bodily sensation returns

**Audio guided version:**

**<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1JNbyPmP3FY1y537FQpdN8VLUguETTXjp/view?usp=sharing>**



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# Grounding and Centering



© Peter Levine, Healing Trauma

Re-aligning our mind and body to a state of balance can quickly reduce stress, anxiety, or sensations of survival mode

Step 1: Find a comfortable, quiet space. Begin standing up, remove your shoes if it feels better.

Step 2: Draw your attention to the springiness and stiff sensations in your legs.

Step 3: Gently shift your weight between your feet, like a swaying tree. Bring awareness to your centre of gravity.

Step 4: Place your hands on your lower belly and feel your centre. Continue swaying in this position.



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# Soft Squeeze

A great way to release emotional tension before sleeping, or at any time in the day.

Step 1: Start lying down or sitting in a chair. Support your arms with a cushion or arm rest.

Step 2: Wrap your fingers around your left thumb with your right hand.

Step 3: Wrap the fingers of your left hand over the index finger of your right hand. Continue 1-2 mins - or for as long as you need.

Step 4: Closing your eyes, gently squeeze the fingers and thumb alternately. See how gently you can squeeze.

Step 5: Turn your attention to your breathing, just notice it.

Step 6: Alternate your attention between your squeezing fingers/thumb and your breathing.



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# Twist and Turn



© Stanley Rosenberg

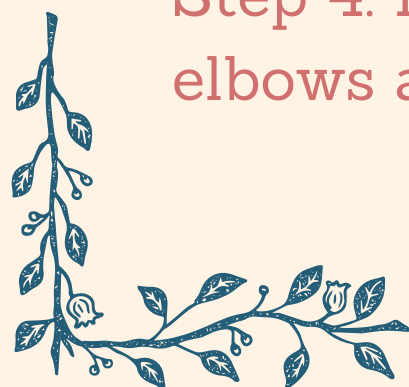
This is a wonderful exercise to do after a long time sitting down at a desk or standing around. Long periods without moving constricts our breathing, potentially worsening stress - so restoring this breathing is very calming.

Step 1: Sit on a firm surface if you have one OR stand up. Shoulders relaxed and down.

Step 2: Fold and cross your arms, with your hands resting lightly on your elbows. You will be rotating your shoulder girdle briskly, first to one side and then to the other, without stopping, and without shifting the hips.

Step 3: Let your elbows drop and rest just in front of your body. Rotate your shoulders so that your elbows move, letting your arms glide lightly over your stomach. and back. Repeat this three times. Do not strain or stop the movement.

Step 4: Repeat - but now lift your elbows to chest level as you sway. Repeat again - but now bringing your elbows as high as you comfortably can.



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# Soothing Touch

We can use physical touch to re-establish contact with our bodies, regulate our nervous system and calm anxiety, stress and dysregulation. By touching our body for more than 30 seconds we also get a release of Oxytocin, the 'love' hormone.

Step 1: Gently start stroking your hands and arms, or your knees, calves - whichever part of your body feels most supportive.

Step 2: Move your hands along your arms and shoulders in gentle rhythmic motions, or along your legs.

Step 3: Move to your chest, gently rubbing the area around your heart.

Step 4: Add a regulating breath if you'd like, and move to your face and neck if that feels soothing.

Remember:

Go gently, slowly, with tenderness & empathy.



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# Regulating Breath



From the Center for Emotional Education

This is a powerful exercise that turns on the parasympathetic part of our nervous system, which is our 'rest & digest' state, bringing a sensation of calm and ease.

Step 1: Take a short, full inhale.

Step 2: Exhale slowly and gently, making the exhale longer than the inhale, until you feel calm return.  
Repeat as needed.



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# Soothing Hold

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Supports us to find safety in our bodies by providing a sensation of containment.

Step 1: Find a comfortable, quiet space - sitting or lying down.

Step 2: Place one hand below the opposite armpit and the other on top of the opposite arm - between the elbow and shoulder. Hugging yourself.

Step 3: Draw attention to the self-contained sensation.

Step 4: Notice physical sensations around the areas you're touching. Such as temperature and pressure on your hands. Notice sensations on the skin and muscles of the arm being hugged. The feeling of arms across your chest.

Step 5: Connect to the emotional experience this creates. Do you feel safe and contained? Keep exploring and connecting to these sensations.



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# Shake It Off



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Animals often shake after dangerous situations to release stress and fear - and to bring themselves back to equilibrium. Using this technique can do the same for us, allowing the nervous system to relax and reset.

Step 1: Find a safe, comfortable space standing up.

Step 2 : Start to shake your legs & feet - allowing the energy to flow through you.

Step 3: Shake your arms & hands - imagine shaking sand off yourself after a day at the beach.

Step 4: Don't limit yourself. Explore other movements that feel relieving.

Step 5: Return to a resting position, notice the sensations in your body. Use a regulating breath or other breath to return to balance.



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# Unfreezing

We often get into a “freeze” state when we feel emotionally unsafe. By re-establishing connection with our bodies, we can release numbness and sensations of rigidity, creating instead a sense of safety.

Step 1: Gently start to make circles with your wrists

Step 2: Move your arms in a wavy motion, up to your shoulders if it feels comfortable/possible

Step 3: Start moving your arms in front of you, behind you - taking up space in your personal bubble

Step 4: Add a regulating breath or gentle orienting

Remember:

Go gently, slowly, with tenderness & empathy

Repeat as needed



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# The Basic Exercise

© Stanley Rosenberg

Supports us to feel relaxed and calmer in the moment. When we notice a sigh, yawn, or swallow, we know we are moving towards relaxation.

Step 1: Sit with your back comfortably supported or lying down.

Step 2: Interlace your hands together and place your hands behind your head - or have your hands still and keep your head stationary.

Step 3: Slowly move your eyes to the far left, without moving your head. Pause for up to 30 seconds, wait for a natural sigh, yawn or swallow - then move to the other side.

Repeat until you start feeling relaxed



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# Shoulder release & stretch into your boundaries

From Linda Thai

## Step 1:

Scrunch your shoulders, face and hands up, hold the tension for 10 seconds. Very, very gradually allow the tension to release and over 10 seconds or longer, let your shoulders, face and hands release.

Pause, notice.

## Step 2:

With strong arms push the air out to the side of you as though you are pushing against something, all the way to full extension. Hold your arms out for a few seconds, and then relax your arms and gently release them back to the sides of your body.

## Step 3:

Do this a few times in different positions around your body, forming a 'bubble' around you. So you are strongly pushing out into your boundaries, and giving your nervous system a clear 'map' of your personal space and boundaries.



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# Voo breathing



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Step 1: Place your feet on the floor. Get comfortable in your chair. Close your eyes if you feel safe, or you can keep your eyes open, keeping a low fixed gaze.

Step 2: Begin to settle into your breath. Just notice each breath cycle as it comes in and out. Just notice. Don't change anything.

Step 3: Now, begin to allow yourself to take a deep, slow breath in through your nose and fill your belly with air. Ensure truly breathing into your belly and not your chest. You will know you are belly breathing if you breathe in and your shoulders don't keep moving up and down while you breathe.

Step 4: On the out breath, allow yourself to make a deep fog horn sound with the word "voo", for three counts (or the longer the better). Allow the sound to vibrate and resonate in your chest, arms, and even legs. Feel and enjoy the deep vibrations the "voo" sound provides.

Step 5: Continue cycles for 3-5 minutes or as long as you are enjoying the breath cycles.

Step 6: Bring your focus back to the room. Begin to bring awareness to your body, maybe twisting your wrists or ankles. When you are ready open your eyes and return to the room.



# Orienting to Safety

© Pat Ogden

Survival mode is a primal response to perceived danger - this means everyday stressful situations create a sense of danger in our bodies when there isn't any. Scanning our environment assures our primal brain there is no real danger.

Step 1: Gently, slowly, look around your environment. Let your gaze be fluid. Moving your neck, taking in all your surroundings.

Step 2: Look above you, below you, behind you, out the window, toward the horizon line. Letting your head follow your eyes slowly.

Step 3: After looking around your whole area, check in. How do you feel?

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# Butterfly Hug



Creating a sense of self-empathy can help us with difficult emotions - especially shame. We can create this sense of empathy with physical safety.

Step 1: Start with eyes open or closed. Take a moment to notice your breathing and bodily sensations.

Step 2: Fold your arms and let them land somewhere on your shoulders, chest or arms.

Step 3: Take alternate taps onto your body, be as gentle or firm as feels comfortable.

Step 4: Repeat as long as you need - when you stop, notice your breathing and bodily sensations again.



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