



A THOUSAND JOYS
empower yourself, transform your world

QUICK REGULATION EXERCISES

The following exercises are quick ways to develop your ability to self-regulate. These exercises will help you to manage your stress by calming or energizing your body and mind in 30 seconds to five minutes. Regular practice can help you to be more grounded, more oriented in present time, and more connected to your breath. To strengthen this new habit, look for opportunities to build these into your day at work, at home or out in the world. You may want to use this list as an inspiration to create other practices for yourself.

Movement

Get Grounded: Sitting in a chair, place both feet on the floor and gently press into your feet so that you feel the muscles in your legs. Notice your legs and how they feel. Imagine your legs as the strong trunk of a tree supporting you. Take a few deep breaths. You can also take your arms, cross them and squeeze up and down your arms. This can offer containment and support as well.

Stretch It Out: Stretch your arms over your heads and reach for the sky. Then gently fold over and reach for your toes imagining you can stretch into the earth. Take 3 long, deep breaths and wiggle your spine to release tension. Straighten your back and lift up to a standing position. Repeat 3 to 5 times.

Touch the Sky Stretch: Reach your arms to the sky. Lean back as far as you can safely. Hold it for a count of 10 seconds. To add variation, you can also try this: Extend the stretch high up to the sky and breathe deeply for a count of 5 seconds. Hold the breath for a count of 5 seconds. Then exhale deeply for 5 seconds. Repeat this 3 times.

Shake, Rattle, and Roll: Relax your body and shake your right arm from the top of your shoulder down through your fingertips. Then shake from your elbow to your fingertips. Now shake your hand only. Take a moment to notice the difference between your arms. Repeat with your left arm. Then repeat with each leg.

Run in Place: Stand up. Shake out all the tension in your body. Run in place for 30 seconds. Stop and take a deep breath. Start running again for another 30 seconds. Take 3 deep breaths. Notice how your body feels.

Let the Music Move You: Play a song you love—or allow yourself to be surprised. Focus completely on the sound for the duration of the song and allow the music to take you to a different place. If you are able...get up and dance!

Meridian Charging: Stand up. Make a loose fist with your left hand and gently tap up and down your right arm. Repeat with the left arm. Then tap on your head and do the same up and down both legs. Take a long deep breath and notice how your whole body feels.

Jump: Stand up and position your feet a little more than shoulder-length apart. Put your arms at your side. Take a deep breath. Do 10 jumping jacks. Take another deep breath. Do another 10 jumping jacks. Take another deep breath.

Breathing and Meditation

Breathe It Out: Close your eyes and relax your body so that you are comfortable in your chair. Place your feet firmly on the ground. Scan your body for any tension and slowly release all of your muscles so they relax. Take a deep breath. Picture your breath filling any stressed or tensed area with a gentle healing light in a color that feels good to you. Allow the tension to melt away. Then, move to another area. Continue to move throughout your body until there is no more tension.

Deep Belly Breathing: Place your hand below your belly button so that you can feel your breath fill your abdomen. Take a deep breath in filling your abdomen. Then breathe out fully so your belly gets flat. Focus on your breath as it moves through your body. Anytime that your mind wanders re-focus on your breath. Repeat for 2 minutes.

Counting Your Breath: Sit comfortably in your chair. Breathe in for a count of 5 seconds. Hold your breath for a count of 5 seconds. Then release your breath for 5 seconds. Repeat 5 times.

Relaxation Response: Sit quietly in a comfortable position and close your eyes. Focus on deeply relaxing all your muscles by first tensing them; then letting the tension go. Focus on your breath to deepen the relaxation. As you breathe in say the word "one" and as you breathe out say the word "one". Do this for 2 minutes.

Listen to the Sound: Relax your body so that you are sitting comfortably. Close your eyes. Ring a bell and listen to the sound until it ends. Notice how the sound feels in your body. Repeat 2 times.

Affirmations for Joy and Happiness: Repeat this affirmation 10 times with your eyes closed. I choose happiness, peace, and love. My heart is open and wonderful things flow into my life.

Change Your Mind: Choose an affirmation that represents your goal, such as "I am relaxed" or "I am focused". Close your eyes and allow all your muscles to relax. Repeat this affirmation over and over again as you inhale and exhale. Allow this affirmation to sink deeply into your mind.

Expression and Connection

Free Writing: Get all those racing thoughts out of your head! For 1-5 minutes, write everything that crosses your mind without worrying about punctuation, grammar or content. Get it out.

Compliment Your Colleague: Say something positive. Express your appreciation and gratitude.

Set Your Group Intention: Take a few moments to close your eyes. Picture a group project is going great. Imagine everyone working together happily, sharing ideas and listening to each other. The energy is relaxed, focused and safe. Hold this image for a moment.

Gratitude and Acknowledgment: Write 3 things that you are grateful for today. Consider asking a colleague to do the same and share.

Laugh! Share a joke or a funny story. Or try this exercise to make everyone laugh. Start by repeating "HO HO HO" for about 15 seconds. Switch to "HA HA HA" for 15 seconds. Then, laugh loudly (even if forced) for 15 seconds. Fake it until you make it!