

## Mind/Body Wellness Practices: Regulate/Re-Energize/Relax



- Calligraphy by Thich Nhat Hanh

Our breathing has the function of helping our body and mind to calm down.

"Breathing in, I calm my body. Breathing out, I bring peace into my body."

**Calm Breath:** Breathe slowly and deeply, in through your nose and out through your mouth

Options: hand on heart while breathing; say centering words or imagine centering images as you breathe.

**Calm with 5 Senses:** Take a moment to notice your surroundings and find **5** things you see, **4** things you hear, **3** things you feel, **2** things you smell, and **1** thing you can taste.

**Distant Breathing:** Focus on something in the distance (e.g. looking out a window), take 3 breaths in/out.

### **Relaxed Body Breathing:**

Inhale, place palms together; Exhale, press INTO your palms

Repeat (can be also done pressing feet into the floor, pressing on your legs, your chair...etc).

**Push Hands** (Peter Levine, Ph.D), Push hands on wall or with partner; push/press-hold-release.

### **Embracing Our Needs:**

Think of two qualities that help you to cope (acceptance/support/strength/hope/compassion/courage).

Place your right hand on your left shoulder (or arm) and think of one of the qualities

Keep that hand in place and place your left hand on your right shoulder (or arm) and think of the second quality.

Take a moment and imagine these qualities as you breathe in and out.

Option: As you breathe out, press your hands on your shoulders or arms.

Option: Think of images of a person, place, or thing that helps you cope.

Option: Use slow bilateral tapping of arms or legs (or "butterfly" tapping).

**Elephant Breath: For Energizing and Calming!** Think about something you want to shower yourself with. Stand with your feet apart. Link your hands and dangle your arms in front of you like an elephant truck. Inhale as you raise your arms high above head and lean back. Exhale and swing your arms down between your legs (if this makes you dizzy, just bring hands down in front of you). Repeat for 3 rounds. On next round, stay up, arch back, and shower yourself with whatever you need right now to feel energized or to feel calm. ~Tara Guber and Leah Kalish *Yoga Pretzels*

**Mountain Pose** – Stand tall, with feet firmly planted on ground, arms down by side.

### **Embrace Tiger/Return to Mountain (adapted from Tai Chi)**

Breathe in, reach your arms out wide and imagine embracing something very heavy.

Breathe out, pushing your hands down, feel your feet firmly planted.

Imagine you are a large and beautiful mountain ~ steady, solid, and strong

### **4B's of Self-Settling**

~ Rena Kornblum (2003). *Disarming the Playground: Violence Prevention through Movement and Pro-social Skills*

**BRAKE:** Reach up and pull your arms toward your body "catch the energy"

**BREATHE:** Release and stretch your arms overhead while taking a breath in

**BRAIN:** Exhale and gently place your hands on your head. Think of a calming, strengthening peaceful thought (e.g. "I am supported" or imagine anything that helps you feel accepted and at peace). Repeat.

**BODY:** Lower your hands and place them over your heart. Feel your body calm down.

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## Relaxation/Guided Imagery

This is a gift of time you give to yourself, a time for your own self-care.

- ★ The simple act of breathing changes your physical body. By breathing in peace, calm, and comfort, you release tension, stress and/or worry. This is welcome relief to our bodies.
- ★ As you focus on your breath, pay attention to how your body relaxes ... softens ... opens ... fills with peace. Notice how you are breathing: fast, slow, deep, shallow...etc.
- ★ Begin to let your breathing become deeper and slower; Inhale through your nose and exhale through your mouth (“Releasing breath”-can make a sound or sigh if you feel comfortable)
- ★ Breathe in slowly with three counts - one ... two ... three. Breathe out slowly with three counts - one ... two ... three.
- ★ Imagine what you’d like to take in for yourself (breathe in) and what you’d like to release (breathe out).
  - Breathe in calm; as you exhale, breathe out stress
  - Breathe in comfort, breathe out tension
  - Breathe in peace, breathe out worry
  - Breathe in acceptance, breathe out criticism/stigma (or whatever word applies)
- ★ Allow your body to soften and relax as you breathe
- ★ Imagine a soothing person, place, or thing that helps you feel safe and accepted. Breathe in the comfort of this image.
- ★ Ending the relaxation: Gradually begin to be aware of your surroundings—feel your feet on the ground and, if your eyes are closed, slowly open them. Take a moment to pay attention to how you are feeling in your body and what this time of relaxation and reflection was like for you.

## Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR)

A voluntary releasing of stress and strain in your body through the process of tensing and relaxing different muscle groups in a progressive manner.

Can also be done all at once (tighten whole body—release)

Option: Use imagery re: tight/loose (e.g. for children-uncooked and cooked spaghetti; freeze/melt).

**Peaceful Place (Guided Imagery):** Think about an environment in which you feel calm, safe, and peaceful; a place you would most like to be if you could be anywhere you choose, real or imaginary. Take a few moments to imagine yourself in this place.

Option: Use art, writing, movement, drama, or poetry to show or describe your peaceful place.

**Mind Jar:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=visXRjwnXXA>, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sT2WjQxuEnE>

**FABRIC STRETCH ~ STRETCH-HOLD-RELEASE** (with colorful stretchy (lycra/spandex) fabric  
Can do this in individually (or in pairs/groups with pieces of fabric of different sizes).

- ★ In groups, can also be done using the Octoband: <https://www.danceforconnection.com/octaband>