

Mind|Body Self-Care Strategies

Self-care is an important component for a healthy Mind|Body. Most often, we have 1 or 2 resources that we call upon to take care of ourselves before, during, or after a situation or extended period of stress and/or emotional dysregulation. At times, those resources may not be enough or not useful in the situation. I invite you to explore and identify other resources that may be helpful to test/learn self-care strategies for navigating the stress/anxiety of day-to-day life.

We don't always know of or consider all the options available to help us navigate stressful, traumatic, or daily challenges. The objective is to be open, be curious, and to test/learn new or different ways to take care of yourself. A valuable insight is to build awareness and tap into the parasympathetic nervous system/vagus nerve. By building awareness and becoming flexible one can enable themselves with the ability to self-regulate when difficult situations arise. Strategies often take place by changing the situation we are in, focusing one's attention elsewhere, disrupting habituated or automated thinking patterns, or developing tools to modify how one responds to the circumstances. I.e., *"right tool for the right job.."*

A quick mantra to consider when you are noticing that you are becoming dysregulated is to practice the fire drill:

STOP|DROP|ROLL...

This translates into STOP what you are currently thinking/doing, DROP into your body and notice what/when/where is holding tension, increasing heart rate/breathing, or building dysregulated energy, and ROLL with the circumstances by focusing on immediately stepping away from the situation and self-soothing through one or many techniques/strategies that work for you....

The nervous system is commonly spoken about when we become dysregulated. Another component that is important to understand is the influence of the vagus nerve. It can be considered the superhighway of communication within our body, the organs, and other sensory inputs that relate to flight/fight/freeze/submit.

If you've never heard of the vagus nerve, I've shared a link to give you some quick science behind it. There are a number of interventions/exercises that can be practiced that can help dial up or dial down, I.e., "vagal tone", the influence of the vagus nerve and help moderate anxiety, stress, etc.

Link: [About The Vagus Nerve](#)

Browse the interventions and links listed, review, test/learn what works and doesn't. Be inspired to find what works for you!

Watch|Listen:

Link: [Box Breathing](#)

Link: [PMR](#)

Link: [Trauma Releasing Exercises \(TRE\)](#)

Link: [About Mindfulness](#)

Link: [Shaking - Stress Relief](#)

Link: [CranioSacral Therapy](#)

Link: [1 Minute Mindfulness](#)

Link: [QIGONG Routine](#)

Link: [Foam Rolling](#)

Link: [5 Minute Mindfulness](#)

Link: [Silk Reeling \(Tai Chi\)](#)

Link: [Third Person Self-Talk](#)

Link: [10 Minute Mindfulness](#)

Link: [ICE or COLD WATER As A Resource](#)

Link: [Binaural Beats](#)

Link: [15 Minute Body Scan](#)

Link: [Tapping](#)

Link: [Loving Kindness](#)

Link: [About Yoga Nidra](#)

Link: [EMDR](#)

Link: [What is AWE?](#)

Link: [Yoga Nidra](#)

Link: [Neuroemotional Technique](#)

Link: [Try a Labyrinth](#)

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Test | Learn:

The objective is to identify a variety of tools that you can use “before”, “during”, and “after” the circumstances that may trigger the dysregulation you experience. There is not a silver bullet that will work across every domain and/or situation. By identifying a number of tools, you will provide yourself flexibility to accommodate what you need – when you need it. The most effective strategy is to identify tools and strategies that enable you to engage both your mind and body together in the exercise.

- Massage, Craniosacral, Yoga, or acupuncture can be helpful.
- Diaphragmatic breathing or "box breathing" to slow the body down and attempt to self-regulate through intentional breathing...
 - Different breathing cadences can be used, what you want to do is have the exhale be longer than the inhale.
 - For example: 3 second inhale/pause/5 second exhale/pause...
 - For example: 4 second inhale/pause/8 second exhale/pause...
- Move your body in some format such as walking, doing stairs, running, jumping rope, or Tabata exercises with the intention to turn on the aerobic system...
- Try a finger labyrinth. A finger labyrinth is similar to a walking labyrinth although it's much smaller. Using your finger(s) instead of your feet. The results can be soothing and calming. Link: [Finger Labyrinth](#)
- Try walking a labyrinth. Link: [World-Wide Labyrinth Locator](#)
- Sitting in a chair or standing - wrap your arms around yourself and rock back and forth and/or rub your belly...
- Use ice to shift your attention from the emotion to the body by holding an ice cube in your hand for as long as you can tolerate or placing your hands in ice. (be safe and use caution as ice can feel scalding)
- Use cold water by splashing your face, put your face in a bowl of water, taking a cold shower. (Reference link included above)
- Practice an activity you can start/stop when needed such as knitting a scarf, crocheting, sewing a missing button back on a shirt/blouse, make jewelry, etc.
- Build a small office garden with a couple small plants that need your attention to water, nurture, and cultivate...
- Humming a tune, buzz like a bee, or sing a favorite lullaby or song.
- Seek laughter and humor through drawing comics depicting your situation, watching something funny on YouTube, etc.
- Long drawn out "om" - similar to what you may do in YOGA class....
- Practice "Loving kindness" mantra towards self and others. aka - "metta" (Reference link included above)
- Take your shoes off and walk barefoot in water, sand, turf, or dirt to shift your attention from the overwhelming emotion to the sensory input your feet are being exposed to...
- Take care of yourself or someone close to you by washing your feet and/or wash your partners feet. Rub your hands and/or your partner's w/ lotion, oil, etc...
- In the moment practice progressive muscle relaxation (PMR) by tensing and relaxing muscles. (Reference link included above)
- Use bilateral movements to engage both sides of the brain in rhythmic pattern such as drumming, etc. Link: [Bilateral Movement](#)
- Toss a ball back and forth with someone or walk side-by-side with someone until you are synchronized together...
- Turn on music that is "uplifting" and "inspiring" which can help disrupt the emotion by using your sense of hearing...
- Listen to binaural beats at different frequencies to match the state you are seeking. Link: [What Are Binaural Beats?](#)
- Hold an object with a tactile feel to shift your focus from the emotion to the object, hold it, feel it, rub it...Such as a spikey ball, shag carpet, a rock, smooth stone, etc.
- Stash a box of clay under your desk at work to squeeze out some energy.
- Create a "busy box" with assorted sensory/tactile objects or objects that need “fixed” or “repaired” ...
- Raise both your arms and fully extend them straight into the air above your head at the same time. Hold them there for a minute or two..
- If in a meeting or online, while sitting in your chair, sit up, ground both feet into the floor, let your arms rest on top of your thighs, and then rotate your hands so both palms are facing the ceiling. Then, allow yourself time to sit and just notice...
- Use a foam roller and stretch your body by rolling over/through the tension/knots...(Reference link included above)
- Scan your body and slowly rotate joints from your toes to ankles, knees, hips, elbows, wrists, etc...
- Identify and experience something of "AWE." Practice connecting with something bigger than yourself. (Reference link included above)

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- Prepare yourself before the moment by using visualization or guided imagery to “see” yourself showing up as you prefer, to “see” yourself in a different environment that may help to down regulate or disrupt the unproductive thoughts. I.e, sitting on a beach, laughing with close friends, etc.
- Push and pull your body in ways to move your joints by pushing against a wall, climbing a rock wall or jungle gym, doing push-ups, pull-ups, pull on elastic bands, etc.
- Journaling to externalize and metabolize the thoughts and/or journal for gratitude to cultivate a healthy focus...
- Use creative writing, poetry, or painting to describe the circumstances you are experiencing.
- Blind contour drawing can be effective way to engage and disrupt thinking patterns. Link: [Blind Contour Drawing](#)
- Create a jigsaw puzzle space which allows you and others the ability to retreat to/focus on when intrusive thoughts or stress may become overwhelming...
- Set up space for an on-going game that you can asynchronously play - such as chess, checkers, sudoku puzzles, scrabble, or a card game.
- Use 2nd or 3rd person self-talk to help navigate the circumstances. (*Reference link included above*)
- Go help someone else! Connect with someone who needs help with a project, task, or even lend an ear to allow someone else the space to share what is going on. Helping others is tremendously helpful for calming ourselves.
- A few other "quick" techniques can include gargle liquid, chew gum, juggle, swing a golf club, purchase a "balancing bird" to focus on, or tackle an immediate task/chore...