

Simple Breathing & Somatic Techniques to Calm, Center & Ground You

When your mind is racing, you're feeling overwhelmed, and find yourself reacting, you aren't capable of making the most intelligent decisions.

These practices are designed to soothe your nervous system and bring you present. There's no need to be perfect—just show up, breathe, and allow yourself to relax. With regular practice, you'll begin to notice more calm, clarity, and connection in your body and mind.

These techniques will help you practice accessing that coveted “Green Zone” state.

I recommend that you take one technique per day and practice it whenever you feel anxious, scattered, or out of balance.

1). Diaphragmatic Breathing

Also known as belly breathing, diaphragmatic breathing involves drawing breath deep into your abdomen rather than your chest. This technique activates the vagus nerve and encourages relaxation. To try it:

- Sit comfortably, either in a chair or on the floor.
- Place one hand on your ribs.
- Inhale slowly through your nose, feeling your ribs expand and your belly rise.
- Exhale gently through your mouth, noticing your ribs move inward and your belly fall.
- Continue for a few minutes, focusing on the rhythm and feel of your breath.

2). Humming

Humming is another simple way to stimulate the vagus nerve. The vibrations it creates help calm the nervous system. Here's how to do it:

- Sit comfortably, either on the floor or in a chair.
- Close your eyes and take a few deep breaths.
- Begin humming softly, tuning into the vibration in your throat and chest.

- Continue for a few minutes, letting yourself relax into the sound and sensation.

3). Alternate Nostril Breathing

This yogic practice can help bring balance to your body and mind. It involves gently alternating your breath between your nostrils. To practice:

- Sit in a comfortable position.
- With your right hand, place your thumb on your right nostril and your ring and pinky fingers on your left.
- Close your right nostril with your thumb and inhale through your left.
- Then close your left nostril and exhale through your right.
- Inhale through your right, close it, and exhale through your left.
- Repeat this pattern for several minutes, keeping your breath slow and steady.

4). Box Breathing

Used by Navy SEALs to stay calm under pressure, box breathing is a four-part breath cycle. It can help you feel grounded and focused. To try it:

- Find a quiet, comfortable place to sit or lie down.
- Close your eyes and inhale through your nose to a count of four.
- Hold your breath for four counts.
- Exhale through your mouth for four counts.
- Hold again for four counts.
- Repeat for several minutes, staying with the rhythm and softening your body with each exhale.
- As you become more comfortable, you can gently increase the count or session length.

Four Simple Somatic Practices

Here are four simple **somatic practices** that can be done anywhere, anytime, without needing special tools or environments:

1. Butterfly Hug

- Cross your arms over your chest so your hands rest just below your collarbones.
 - Alternate tapping your hands gently left, right, left, right.
 - Breathe slowly as you do this, noticing the calming rhythm.
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2. 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding

- Look around and name:
 - 5 things you can see
 - 4 things you can feel (e.g., clothes on your skin, chair under you)
 - 3 things you can hear
 - 2 things you can smell
 - 1 thing you can taste
 - This helps anchor you in the present moment.
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3. Feet on the Floor

- Sit or stand and place both feet firmly on the ground.
- Press them down slightly, noticing the connection with the floor.
- Imagine roots growing from your feet into the earth as you take a few slow breaths.

4. Orienting

- Gently turn your head and eyes to slowly look around your environment.
- Let your gaze land on something neutral or pleasant (a plant, a color, a window).
- This signals to your nervous system that you are safe in the present moment.