



Breathing and Body-Calming Coping Skills



Slow diaphragmatic breathing

Breathe slowly into your belly rather than taking quick, shallow breaths into your chest.

Best for: anxiety, overwhelm, physical tension.



Longer-exhale breathing

Breathe in gently and make your exhale slightly longer than your inhale.

Best for: stress, nervousness, agitation.



Box breathing

Inhale, hold, exhale, and hold again for roughly equal counts that feel comfortable to you.

Best for: acute stress, frustration, concentration.



Progressive muscle relaxation

Slowly tense and release different muscle groups, noticing the contrast between tension and relaxation.

Best for: body tension, restlessness, bedtime stress.



Unclench your jaw

Let your teeth separate, soften your tongue, and deliberately relax the muscles around your mouth.

Best for: anger, stress, tension headaches.



Drop your shoulders

Take a breath and consciously lower your shoulders away from your ears instead of holding them tight.

Best for: tension, anxiety, work stress.



Gentle stretching

Spend a few minutes slowly stretching your neck, shoulders, back, arms, or legs without forcing the movement.

Best for: restlessness, physical tension.



Shake out tension

Stand somewhere private and gently shake your hands, arms, and legs to release some physical stiffness.

Best for: agitation, nervous energy, restlessness.

Slow your movements



Deliberately make ordinary movements slower for a few minutes, such as walking, reaching, or making a drink.

Best for: overwhelm, irritability, racing thoughts.



Take a deliberate pause

Stop what you're doing, put both feet on the floor, and take several calm breaths before responding.

Best for: anger, conflict, impulsive reactions.

