

Calming Exercises

The purpose of these two exercises is to enable you to calm down the physical sensations that occur in your body when you get agitated, anxious and/or angry. They are simple techniques that can be used almost anywhere and anytime to calm yourself. They are best used together and can have a calming effect almost immediately.

Exercise 1. In a standing or a sitting position, place both your feet flat on the floor so that your heels and the balls of your feet are in physical contact with the floor. Focus your attention on the physical sensation of the soles of your feet touching the floor. Keep your attention on this physical experience of your feet touching the floor for at least two minutes. If it helps to keep you focused, look at your feet as you do this. But remember the exercise is stay aware of the physical sensation of your feet resting against the floor.

Exercise 2. Staying aware of the sensation of your feet touching the floor, include in your awareness the sensation of breathing, paying attention to your experience of taking in air and letting air out. As you become aware of your breathing, slow down the speed of your out-breath, so that you are breathing out really slowly. Don't hold your breath as you do this, as this is likely to make you more tense, but simply allow yourself to breathe out at a slower but regular pace. You don't need to think about how fast or slow you are breathing in, just stay focused on breathing out really slowly.

Exercise 3. Lying on your back; make yourself comfortable with arms loosely by your side. Be aware of the sensation of your body being supported by the mattress/settee. Slow down your breathing and focus on each breath that you take... Now make an intentional effort to tense the muscle groups of your body beginning with your head and face and working downwards, tense and release the muscles, feel the release relaxing you and focus on that feeling; repeat with your neck, arms, hands, wrists and fingers; move to your chest and stomach, back, pelvis; thighs, calves; ankles feet and toes...If you reach your toes before falling asleep (this will come with practise) return to focussing on your breathing- long; deep and slow; imagine yourself somewhere safe, still, warm, relaxed and begin the muscle relaxing again...

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