

Finding Your Calm

5 Strategies to Reduce Stress



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Objectives

- Identify three frames of thinking to promote calm
- Demonstrate 2 breathing techniques to calm anxiety
- Acquire a basic understanding of Mindfulness
- Understand how sound can positively impact mood, anxiety level
- Identify 5 elements of a self-care kit

Frame of Thought

Living in the present moment

“Being in the present moment, or the “here and now,” means that we are aware and mindful of what is happening at this very moment. We are not distracted by ruminations on the past or worries about the future, be centered in the here and now. All of our attention is focused on the present moment.” (Thum, 2008)

Stoicism

“Teaches us to focus on the things we can control—our thoughts, emotions, and actions—while accepting the things we cannot, such as the actions of others or the natural course of events going on in the world around us.” (orionphilosphy.com)

Stay Curious

“A strong desire to know or learn something.” (<https://languages.oup.com/google-dictionary-en/>)

Breathing

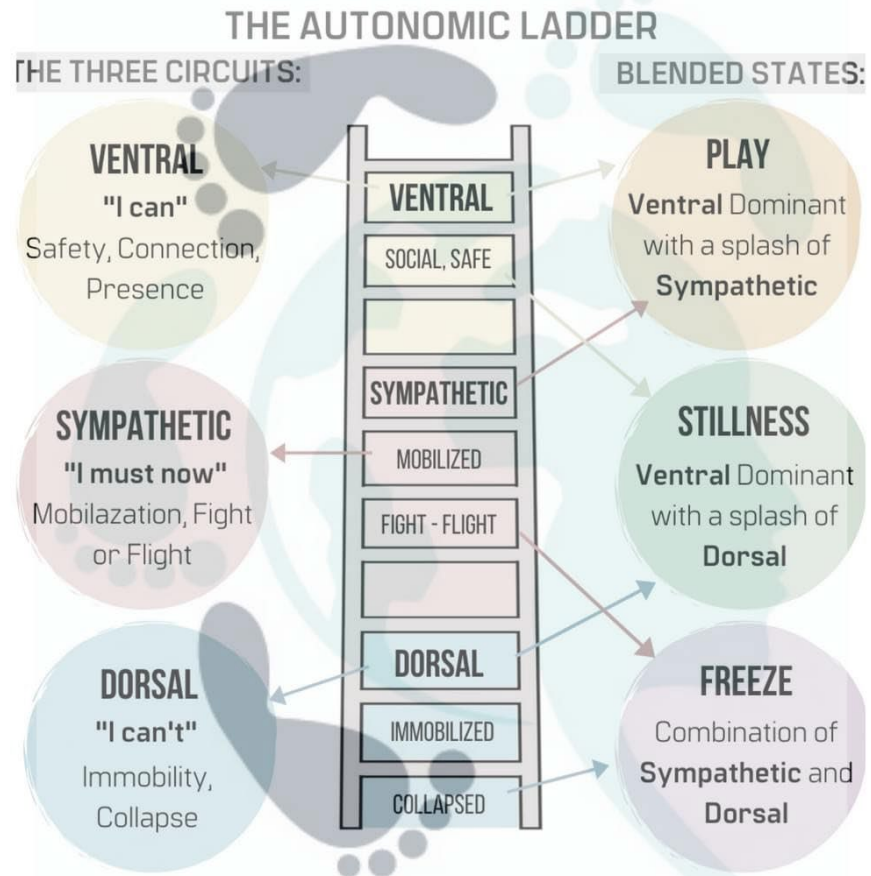
Why breathing helps?

“Changing the rhythm of your breath can signal relaxation, slowing your heart rate and stimulating the vagus nerve, which runs from the brain stem to the abdomen, and is part of the parasympathetic nervous system, which is responsible for the body’s “rest and digest” activities (in contrast to the sympathetic nervous system, which regulates many of our “fight or flight” responses). Triggering your parasympathetic nervous system helps you start to calm down. You feel better. And your ability to think rationally returns.”

Ref: <https://hbr.org/2020/09/research-why-breathing-is-so-effective-at-reducing-stress>

The autonomic Ladder

Where are you on ladder today?



Diane Wright IIR

Breathing

4 – 7 – 8 Technique

(Dr. Andrew Weil)



Breathing

Box Breathing



Mindfulness

Mindfulness is about being fully awake in our lives.
It is about perceiving the exquisite vividness of each moment.
We also gain immediate access to our own powerful inner resources
for insight, transformation, and healing.

- *Jon Kabat-Zinn* -

Mindfulness – 17 Ways to Be More Mindful Every Day (Jon Kabat-Zinn)

1. A good place to start cultivating mindfulness is in the body.
2. Befriending your breath is a good idea, since you can't leave home without it – and it is so related to our states of mind.
3. See if from time to time you can just feel the breath moving in and out of your body.
4. Locate where the breath sensations are most vivid, and “surf” with full awareness on those breath waves, moment by moment – in the belly, at the nostrils, or wherever.
5. Try lying in bed for a few moments after you wake up, and just ride on the waves of your own breathing moment by moment and breath by breath.
6. Experiment with expanding your awareness around your breath until it includes a sense of the body as a whole lying in bed breathing.
7. As best you can, be aware of the various sensations fluxing in the body, including the breath sensations.
8. Just rest in the awareness of lying here breathing, outside of time, even if it is only for a minute or two by the clock.

Mindfulness – 17 Ways to Be More Mindful Every Day (Jon Kabat-Zinn)

9. When you notice that the mind has a life of its own and wanders here and there, keep in mind that this is just what minds do, so there is no need to judge it.
10. Just note what is on your mind if you are no longer in touch with the breath or with the sensations of the body lying in the bed, and without judgment or criticism, just let that be part of your awareness in the moment, and feature once again the breath and the body center-stage in the field of your awareness.
11. Repeat step 10 a few million times.
12. It is very easy to fall into the thought stream and get caught up in the future (worrying, planning) and the past (remembering, blaming, pining) and in reactive and often painful emotions.
13. No need to try to stop any of this from happening when you can just bring a big embrace of openhearted, spacious, accepting awareness to it and, lo and behold, you are once again sitting on the bank of the thought stream, listening to the gurgling but not so caught up in the torrent for the moment.
14. You can cultivate mindfulness in this way lying in bed for a few moments in the morning, or in the evening before going to sleep.

Mindfulness – 17 Ways to Be More Mindful Every Day (Jon Kabat-Zinn)

15. You can also cultivate mindfulness sitting, standing, walking, and eating – in fact, in any position or situation, including brushing your teeth, taking a shower, talking on the phone, running, working out at the gym, cooking, picking up the kids, making love, whatever is unfolding in your life in the present moment.
16. It helps to be present for it and for yourself.
17. Remember – the real meditation is your life, and how you inhabit it moment by moment.

Resource: <https://palousemindfulness.com/index.html>

Sound - Music, Bilateral, Binaural

“Music can lift us out of depression or move us to tears – it is a remedy, a tonic, orange juice for the ear. But for many of my neurological patients, music is even more – it can provide access, even when no medication can, to movement, to speech, to life. For them, music is not a luxury, but a necessity.”

Oliver Sacks, best-selling author (“Awakenings,” “Hallucinations,” “Gratitude” and professor of neurology at NYU School Of Medicine



Mozart - Sonata for Two Pianos in D, K. 448

Alpha, theta, beta wave stimulation

Ref:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6130927/>

Sound –Bilateral Beats vs. Binaural Beats

Bilateral stimulation is stimuli (visual, auditory or tactile) which occur in a rhythmic left-right pattern.

Bilateral stimulation is a core treatment element of EMDR and a process which distinguishes EMDR from any other method. While there is still a lot to learn about this amazing process, it can be said that it produces four main effects:

1. A relaxation effect including decreased physiological arousal.
2. Increased attentional flexibility (meaning that your thoughts become less 'stuck' on whatever was bothering you).
3. Distancing effect (meaning that the problem seems smaller and further away).
4. Decreased worry.

These effects are experienced as a 'bottom-up' cascade of changes meaning that they are experienced in the lower areas of the brain first, as a physiological response (i.e.; decreased tension) then travel 'up' the brain leading to mental changes (e.g.; decreased worry). Because this order works with how the brain normally processes information, the effects are often experienced more quickly and easily than with say top-down strategies such as insight and conscious introspection.

Sound –Bilateral Beats vs. Binaural Beats

How does bilateral stimulation work?

One theory : “**Orienting Reflex**” - the natural tendency for your nervous system to orient itself to new stimuli (ex: racket in the kitchen).

You investigate, find the light has fallen, and attention returns to what you were doing before (ex: watching football game). This is known as habituation – when we cease responding to a stimuli.

Habituation does not occur with bilateral stimulation – your brain just can’t turn away from it. As a result of your attention being held captive by the bilateral stimulation, two things happen. 1) You can’t think of the problem and 2) you start to feel relaxed. This leads to changes in the way the memory of the problem is stored through what’s known as non-associative learning. Non-associative learning is a change in a response to a stimulus that does not involve associating the presented stimulus with another stimulus or event such as reward or punishment.

Ref: <https://anxietyreleaseapp.com/what-is-bilateral-stimulation/#:~:text=Auditory%20bilateral%20stimulation%20could%20involve,park%20in%20the%20late%201980's>.

Sound –Bilateral Beats vs. Binaural Beats

What is a Binaural Beat?

A binaural beat is an illusion created by the brain when you listen to two tones with slightly different frequencies at the same time.

How does binaural beats work?

Your brain interprets the two tones as a beat of its own. The two tones align with your brain waves to produce a beat with a different frequency. This frequency is the difference in hertz (Hz) between the frequencies of the two tones. (ex: Listening to a 440 Hz tone – left ear, 444 Hz tone – right ear, you would hear a 4Hz tone)

When you listen to binaural beats, your brain activity matches the frequency set by the frequency of the beat. This is called the frequency-following effect. This means you can use binaural beats to entrain your mind to reach a certain mental state.

Ref: <https://www.webmd.com/balance/what-are-binaural-beats#091e9c5e8216a83a-2-7>

Sound –Bilateral Beats vs. Binaural Beats

Superior Olivary Complex (found in the brain stem) is the first part of the brain that processes sound input from both ears. The superior olivary complex synchronizes various activities of the many neurons in the brain. This complex responds when it hears two close frequencies and creates a binaural beat, which changes the brain waves. The synchronization of the neural activities across the brain is called entrainment.

According to some researchers, when you listen to certain binaural beats, they can increase the strength of certain brain waves. This can increase or hold back different brain functions that control thinking and feeling.

Ref: <https://www.webmd.com/balance/what-are-binaural-beats#091e9c5e8216a83a-2-7>

Sound –Bilateral Beats vs. Binaural Beats

Neurons in your brain use electrical signals to create thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. When neurons synchronize, this creates brain waves. Brain waves can be measured by a technique called electroencephalography (EEG). This technique involves electrodes put on the scalp to record electric signals.

Brain waves can range from low frequency to high amplitude and high frequency to low amplitude. The brain waves create binaural beats. This leads to different mental states which affect the brain in different ways.

Ref: <https://www.webmd.com/balance/what-are-binaural-beats#091e9c5e8216a83a-2-7>

Sound –Bilateral Beats vs. Binaural Beats

There are five different brain waves:

Delta: 1-4 Hz. Delta is the lowest frequency state, and it's linked to:

- Deep sleep
- Healing and pain relief
- [Meditation](#)
- Anti-aging: cortisol reduction/DHEA increase
- Access to the unconscious mind

Theta: 4-8 Hz. Theta binaural beats benefits include:

- Meditation
- Deep relaxation
- Creativity

Ref: <https://www.webmd.com/balance/what-are-binaural-beats#091e9c5e8216a83a-2-7>

Sound –Bilateral Beats vs. Binaural Beats

Alpha: 8-14 Hz. When you are in an alpha state of mind, your brain is focused and productive. Alpha brain waves help you to:

- Relax and focus
- Reduce Stress
- Maintain positive thinking
- Increase your learning capabilities
- Easily engage in activities and the environment because you are in a state of flow

Beta: 14-30 Hz. Beta is a higher frequency brainwave and helps in:

- Keeping your attention focused
- Analytical thinking and solving problems
- Stimulating energy and action
- High-level cognition

Ref: <https://www.webmd.com/balance/what-are-binaural-beats#091e9c5e8216a83a-2-7>

Sound –Bilateral Beats vs. Binaural Beats

Gamma: 30-100 Hz. With a higher frequency than beta, these brain waves help in:

- Increased cognitive enhancement
- Attention to detail, helping in memory recall
- A different way of thinking, which is a sign of creativity

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Sound –Bilateral Beats vs. Binaural Beats

Benefits of Binaural Beats

There is a lack of clinical research for binaural beats. The evidence for the frequency-following effect is conflicting and inconclusive. Talk to your doctor before trying to use binaural beats for any health reasons.

Benefits of binaural beats include:

- Increased creativity and cognitive enhancement
- Reduced anxiety and improved mood
- Helping you enter a meditative state
- Improved sleeping habits
- Helping to improve focus, attention, and memory retention

Side Effects of Binaural Beats

Depression. Some studies have linked binaural beats to increased feelings of depression.

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Binaural Beats:

SleepTube: <https://youtu.be/xsfyb1pStdw?feature=shared>

Music for Body and Spirit: <https://youtu.be/acQS2Fef8tU?feature=shared>

Brain Calming: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mXw2aAforhg>

Happiness Frequency: Binaural Beat Meditation Music with Alpha Brain Waves:
<https://youtu.be/dwRALuLJKU?feature=shared>

Binaural Beats for Anxiety and Panic Attacks: <https://youtu.be/JSfp671dazY?feature=shared>

Bilateral Beats (need headphones):

Gentle But Strong Bilateral music with some binaural:
<https://youtu.be/cuJDMathO4U?feature=shared>

Relaxing Bilateral Stim Music: <https://youtu.be/L5ww7aKOAq4?feature=shared>

10 Hrs Bilateral Music: <https://youtu.be/pu5pi1a2Sn0?feature=shared>

Self-Care Kits – Emotional First Aid

Elements of a self-care kit:

Identify what soothes from a sensory perspective:

Sight, Sound, Taste, Touch, Smell

Smell: Essential Oils: Lavender; Tea: Peppermint, Chamomile & Lavender

Sight/Touch: Written Mantras in a journal: “I am enough”, “I am safe”;
Pens/Paints/Journal to write

Sight: Photos that are meaningful; list of places that are close by where you can experience nature

Touch: Something soft, e.g., feathers, plush toy; taking a shower

Taste: Favorite mints, gum, tea

Sound: MP3 player with favorite playlist

Ref: www.essentiallifefskills.org

Review

- The three frames of thinking: Present mindedness, Stoicism, Curiosity
- The two breathing techniques: 4-7-8; Box
- Reviewed 17 ways to be more mindful + palousemindfulness.com
- Took a look at sound, bilateral vs. binaural beats and impact to mood and brainwaves.
- Reviewed items one should have in their emotional first aid kit, including items for each of the senses: sight, taste, smell, touch, sound

References

- “What is the Present Moment?” <https://www.myrkothum.com/what-is-the-present-moment/>
- Definition of Curiosity : (<https://languages.oup.com/google-dictionary-en/>)
- “Why Breathing Helps” : <https://hbr.org/2020/09/research-why-breathing-is-so-effective-at-reducing-stress>
- “The Autonomic Ladder” Diane Wright IIR (Facebook)
- “4-7-8 Breathing Technique” Dr. Andrew Weil <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p8fjYPC-k2k>
- “Box Breathing Technique”: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tEmt1Znux58>
- Mindfulness : <https://palousemindfulness.com/index.html>
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- Emotional First Aid: www.essentiallifefirstaid.org



Questions?

Please provide evaluation

Wellness Workshop Satisfaction
Survey

