



9

Mindful

Meditation

Exercises

Stony Brook University
COVID-19 Community Outreach Project
Created by DPT & MSOT Students

WARM-UP

Pranayama Deep Breathing

- Stand with your feet together maintaining good posture throughout the entire warm-up
 - Eyes open
 - Aware of your posture and environment
- Fingers interlaced under your chin, elbows up to the sky, gradually contract your abdominal muscles
 - Mouth closed
 - BREATHE IN (completely and slow)
- Tilt your head back (do not push with hands)
 - Bring palms and elbows together
 - Mouth open
 - EXHALE (completely and slow)
- Perform this 8-10 times!



Benefits:

Maximizes oxygen to muscles and organs

Expands your lungs

Eases your mind

Prepares your mind for the exercises

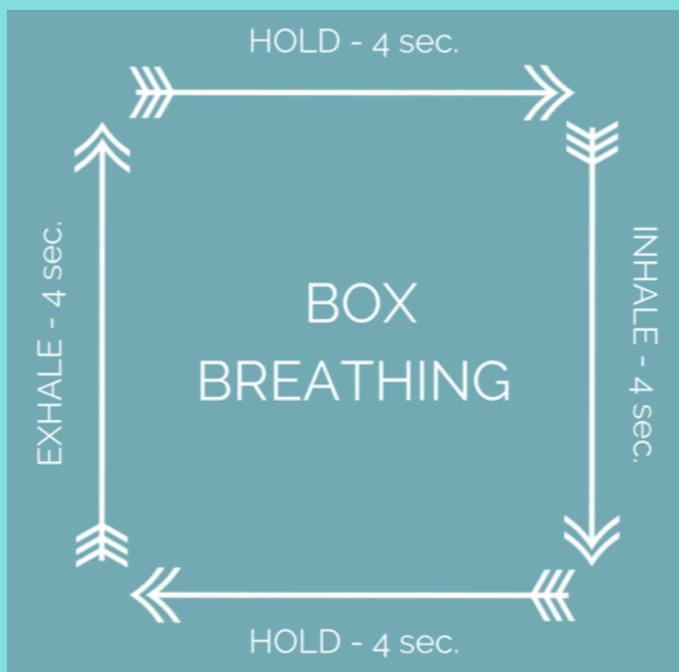
Removes excess carbon dioxide from lungs, brings in maximum amount of oxygen

Caution: If you feel dizzy at any point, sit down and take a break, you're just getting used to it!



Visualize a happy place

This activity goal is for an individual to practice a calming cognitive process by visualizing what brings them peace and happiness. To start this activity, make sure you are in a comfortable setting. You can be sitting, lying down, or standing. Once comfortable, picture a place or a time in your life that brings you peace and happiness. Try to spend five minutes imagining that you are reliving or living that moment.



Science of Connectedness. (2019, January 28). Box breathing.



Box Breathing

Box breathing is a practice for exercising healthy breathing techniques for relaxation. To start this exercise make sure that you are seated comfortably on the chair, couch, or floor of your choice. There are five steps to follow to practice boxed breathing. As you do each other step, imagine your are breathing through each line of a square:

1. Exhale slowly - try to expel all air in your lungs
2. Inhale slowly through your nose until your lungs are filled with air or for a duration of 4 seconds
3. Hold your breath for another 4 seconds
4. Exhale slowly, expelling all your air once again Repeat the process for however many times you desire

Gotter, A. (2019, February 22). Box breathing.

MEDITATIVE DRAWING



This is an activity to creatively express what is on your mind through art. To start this exercise, seat yourself comfortably at a desk. Make sure that you have a pen/pencil and paper. Start to draw whatever is on your mind for 10 minutes. There are no rules as to what you draw, it can be scribbles, lines, or a full picture.



Tai Chi

- Go for a short walk outside (3-5 minutes)
 - Turning head from side to side (10 times each)
 - Bring your arms out to the side and look in that direction, the other hand is on your chest
 - Shoulder circles: both directions by lifting shoulders towards ears, back, down and forward (10 times each)
- Kicking movement: stand and kick forward slowly and punch with the opposite hand (10 times each side)
- Watch a video on beginner Tai Chi for 20 mins
- Tense and relax: standing with arms at side (repeat 5 times)
 - Inhale and clench hands and all muscles of your body while up on your toes
 - Exhale and relax hands and all muscles while returning to your feet



Benefits:

Self-awareness
Calms the mind
Improves balance
General strength

POSITIVE AFFIRMATIONS



Say out loud positive words to yourself
(this can be in front of a mirror or in a calm setting)

Here are some examples:

Past tense affirmations:

- I have forgiven myself for a mistake
- I am strong, I have survived many things to get me to where I am
- I have positively affected someone's life
- I am grateful for the success and experiences I have

Present tense affirmations

- I am calm and relaxed
- I am in the present moment
- I am grateful for my life
- I am confident
- I can control my emotions
- I belong here
- I am loved
- Good flows to me, good flows from me

Future tense affirmations

- Good things are to come
- I will try my hardest, and if I don't succeed that it is okay.
- I can look for a solution, if I don't find one I can let it go
- I will make the most of new opportunities

Benefits:

Can reduce chronic pain
Relaxes the mind
Boosts mood
Encourages positive thought
Creates a mind-body connection



Hatha Yoga

Hatha yoga is a practice that focuses on bringing peace to the mind and body through poses and breathing. This type of yoga is excellent for beginners who are looking for a slow paced practice for relaxation to combat stress and anxiety. Using a cell phone, tablet, or laptop, search for a hatha or beginners slow, gentle flow yoga class on youtube. Chair yoga is also a great alternative if being seated is more preferable (if you have difficulties with balance, chair yoga is safer).

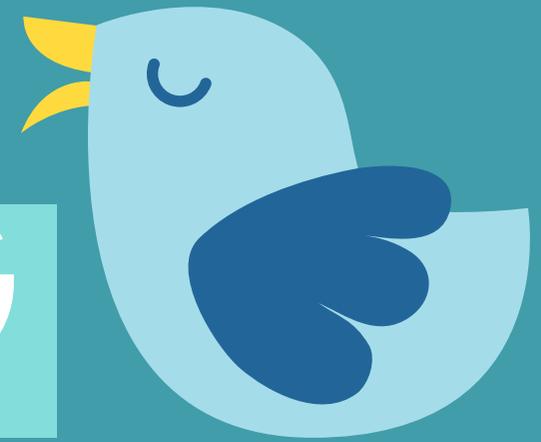
Disclaimer: NEVER hold poses that are painful or push yourself past your limits with this exercise. If you have any health concerns, you should consult with your health care provider to make sure yoga is a safe choice for you. If you have limitations, most yoga poses are modifiable so you can still receive the benefits of the practice in a safe manner!

BODY SCAN MEDITATION



The purpose of this meditation is to take a pause for yourself during the day when you feel anxious and recognize your personal stress response. Often, we do not even realize how stress is affecting us physically while our mind is racing. Do you clench your teeth and jaws? Are your hands squeezing into fists? Are your shoulders hiked up so high they can almost touch your ears? Is your heart beating rapidly while you take shallow breaths? These signs might indicate how your body is reacting to your state of stress. To complete this exercise, when you feel stressed, take a comfortable seat or lie down and scan yourself for areas of tension. Focus on those body responses to stress and try to relax as you take 10 deep breaths (or more!). As you begin to understand your personal response to stress, you will learn that you have a choice to calm down your mind and body.

MINDFUL LISTENING



With this exercise, you choose a new song and listen closely to the sound of the instruments and the artist's vocals without judgement. Continue to listen to the song even if it's not what you typically listen to. Draw your full attention to the sounds, breathe slowly and deeply, and allow yourself to "feel" the music. If you do not have the ability to listen to music, you can simply focus on the sounds in your natural surroundings (i.e. birds chirping)



OUTDOOR MINDFUL OBSERVATIONS

This exercise is great for those who may need a breath of fresh air, however, please continue to practice social distancing! Choose a spot outside your house, such as the backyard or patio (or an open window for those in apartments) and observe the natural environment around you. Focus on a flower, a tree, the clouds, or the bees in the garden for a minute or so. Slowly relax your body and mind as you concentrate on this object. Take slow and steady breaths as you allow yourself to appreciate the object's existence and purpose in the world.



COOL DOWN

Savasana (Body Scan)



Savasana is a pose in hatha yoga that is often used to end yoga sessions. This pose challenges you to achieve a state of total, deep relaxation while releasing emotions and thoughts that distract you from the present. To end your mindfulness or meditation activity, take a seat on a yoga mat, carpet, or your bed. Gently lower yourself onto your back and close your eyes, with the soles of the feet dropping open and arms placed palm-up comfortably on the ground or bed. As you breathe, imagine the air filling your rib cage 360° and release any tension in your muscles from the feet to the top of your head. Relax the muscles of the face and think about inviting peace into every cell in your body and mind. Remain in this pose for 5 minutes or more in silence or with calming music of your choosing.

For further instruction or video guidance, look up Savasana pose on youtube.

Disclaimer: NEVER hold poses that are painful or push yourself past your limits with this exercise. If you have any health concerns, you should consult with your health care provider to make sure yoga is a safe choice for you.

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