



May 2026
Trapani

The Well-Being Code: Energy Tools and Mind- Body Activity for Self-Care

Mariella Pugliesi

europass
Teacher
Academy

Day 1

Let's start with a self-massage for Wellbeing

Start by rubbing your scalp as if you were shampooing your hair. Then, rub your face as if you were washing it, moving from the inside out to release any thoughts or fatigue.

Gently massage your eyes, cheeks, nose, and ears. Make funny faces with your mouth, stick out your tongue.

Continue massaging your shoulders and arms, giving them a firm squeeze. Massage your fingers.

Massage your belly and the area at the back where your kidneys are.

**Massage your heart, give yourself a hug,
and say thank you...**



Week at a Glance

Day 1 (Mon): Course Introduction, Get to know each other, Emotions and Stress

Day 2 (Tue): Mindfulness, Happiness, Life Sphere and Walking Meditation

Day 3 (Wed):, Relaxation Techniques and meditation. Special Day in Erice

Day 4 (Thu): The Well being in your classroom (Active Listening and Empathy),
Breathwork Chair yoga

Day 5 (Fri): The secret of sleeping, Do you smile? Certificate Awarding

Day 6 (Sat): Cultural Activity (Or during the week)

Let's Break the Ice!



Build Your «Lego Self»

Using Lego bricks, you'll build a **character that represents you**. Think about your personality, strengths, hobbies, or anything important to you.

There are no rules, this is your unique representation, and creativity is key!

- Building Time: 15 minutes
- Sharing and Presentation: 3 minutes per person

What does your character say about you?

Definition

“An emotion is a brief, automatic psychological and physiological response to a significant stimulus, involving changes in experience, behavior, and the body”

Curiosity: The word “emotion” was first introduced into psychology in the late 19th century by Thomas Brown (1820s lectures). He used the term to describe mental states such as joy, fear, anger, and sorrow, distinguishing them from purely intellectual processes.

Emotions VS Feelings VS Mood

Emotions

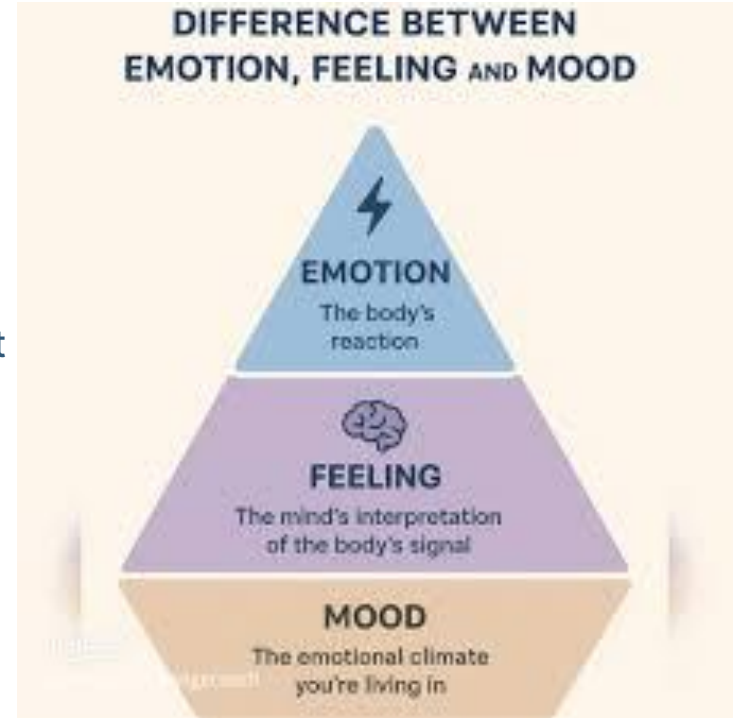
- Fast and automatic reactions
- Triggered by a specific event
- Short-lived (seconds to minutes), often physical (heart rate, facial expression)

Feelings

- The conscious experience of an emotion
- When you name and interpret what you felt
- Last longer than emotions

Mood

- A general emotional state
- Not always linked to a specific event
- Lasts longer (hours or days)
- Lower intensity but more persistent



The Plutchik's Emotion Wheel

Robert Plutchik's emotion wheel is shaped like a colorful flower.

The **eight core emotions** make up the flower's center, and each petal conveys different levels (or intensities) of those emotions.

The space between two petals represents how those emotions can be combined. These emotions are called complex.



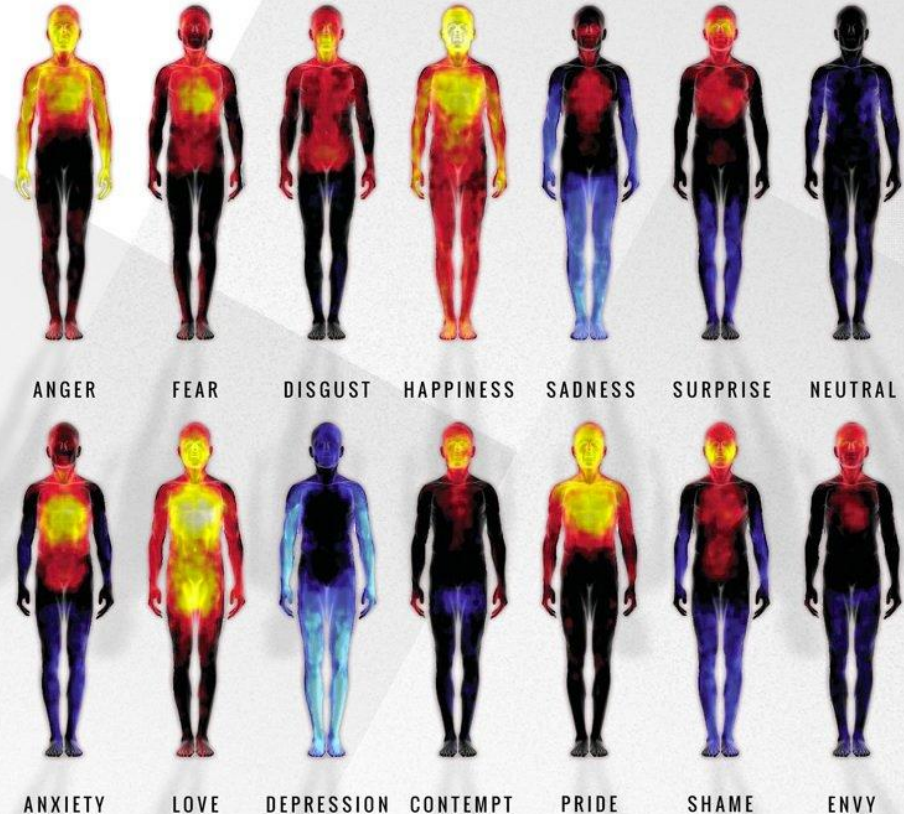
Emotions are comfortable or uncomfortable.

Many people feel emotions in certain parts of their **bodies—stress in their neck or anxiety in their stomach, happiness in their chest.** As you can see in the map below, “**anger**” is a heady, top-of-body emotion, while “**love**” and “**happiness**” is felt rather strongly all over.

Feelings such as “**sadness**” and “**depression**,” however, are experienced as a relative **deactivation of sensations**, compared to normal states.

A MAP OF EMOTIONS

A study published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences
November 27, 2013



Emotional signatures in different parts of the body are “culturally universal” according many researches.

What is Stress for you?

Do you experience symptoms of stress? If so, where do you feel them in your body?

Experiences Created by Mind

Thoughts, Images, Predictions
Memories, Stories
Judgements, Self-Criticism



vs.



Our Sensory Experience

Our 5 Senses
Bodily Sensations
Interoception



Is THIS a THREAT?

NO?

Parasympathetic Nervous System (Deactivation)

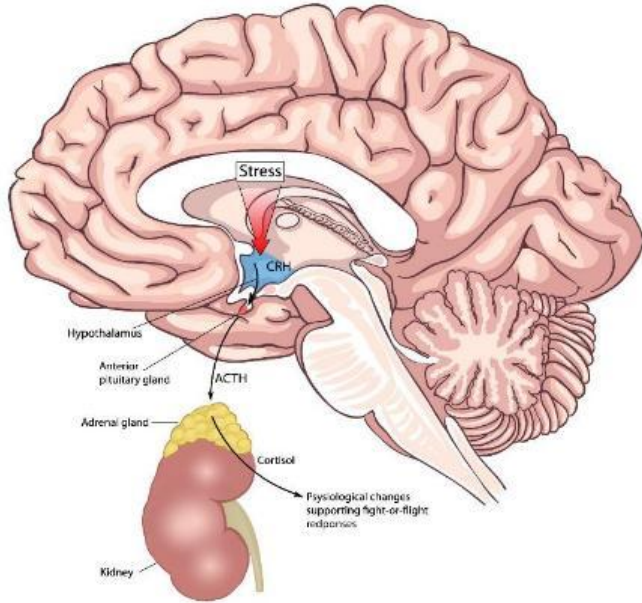
- Rest and digest system
- Opiates & Oxytocin
- Experiences: At ease, Inner Peace & Calm

YES!

Sympathetic Nervous System (Activation!)

- Fight/Flight/Freeze
- Cortisol & Adrenaline
- Experiences: Threat, On Guard, Stress & Anxiety

Neuroscience of conflict



Cortisol and Adrenalin

FIGHT

Fight – power, intimidation, control creates safety – I’m perfect – I’m OK you’re not ok

FLIGHT

Flight – perfection equals safety, always worrying, massive inner critic – I’m not ok you’re not ok

FREEZE

Freeze – safety in solitude – I’m really imperfect – I’m not ok you’re ok

FAWN

Fawn – safety in merging what I want with what you want – ignoring personal needs

We can't make decisions in the fight flight freeze fall mode because of cortisol release

What is Stress?

What are some common causes of stress?

Stress can be triggered by different life experiences. Everyone is stressed by different things, but common external causes of stress include:

- Major life events, such as a death in the family or divorce
- Family illness or health problems
- Problems at work or school
- Financial issues or relationship worries

Stress is a common and normal physical response to challenging or new situations

- Everyone experiences stress differently.
- Stress can be a positive reaction when it helps motivate you and helps you to overcome challenges. **Productive Stress**
- Stress becomes problematic when it makes you feel overwhelmed or continues for a long time. **Problematic Stress**
- Stress can be prevented and managed



How do I know if I'm too stressed?

Emotional and mental signs:

- Feeling overwhelmed or unable to cope
- Feeling 'on edge' or unable to stop worrying
- difficulty concentrating
- Changes in mood, irritability, or anger
- Thoughts of self-harm or suicide

Physical and behavioural signs:

- Changes in sleep patterns or feeling exhausted
- Changes in appetite
- Physical reactions such as headaches, muscle tension, upset stomach
- Withdrawal from friends and family
- Reliance on alcohol or other substances to cope



Signs of stress in youth can show up in a number of ways

- **Irritability and anger:** Children don't always have the words to describe how they are feeling and sometimes tension bubbles over into a bad mood. Stressed-out kids and teens might be more short-tempered or argumentative than normal.
- **Changes in behavior:** A young child who used to be a great listener is suddenly acting out. A once-active teen now doesn't want to leave the house. Sudden changes can be a sign that stress levels are high.
- **Trouble sleeping:** A child or teen might complain of feeling tired all the time, sleep more than usual, or have trouble falling asleep at night.
- **Neglecting responsibilities:** If an adolescent suddenly drops the ball on homework, forgets obligations, or starts procrastinating more than usual, stress might be a factor.
- **Eating changes:** Eating too much or too little can both be reactions to stress.
- **Getting sick more often:** Stress often shows up as physical symptoms. Children who feel stress often report headaches or stomachaches, and might make frequent trips to the school nurse's office.

[Unicef](#)
[Research](#)



What Is Burnout?

Our lives get busy as we deal with various daily responsibilities, be it working, helping others, or taking care of our families. Sometimes, we get too busy and forget to take a step back and rest. That's when burnout can occur.

Burnout is a form of exhaustion caused by constantly feeling swamped. It happens when we experience too much emotional, physical, and mental fatigue for too long.

In many cases, burnout is related to one's job. But burnout can also happen in other areas of your life and affect your health.

Burnout VS Stress

Burnout can be caused by stress, but it's not the same. Stress results from too much mental and physical pressure and too many demands on your time and energy.

Burnout is about too little. Too little emotion, motivation, or care. Stress can make you feel overwhelmed, but **burnout makes you feel depleted and used up.**



Life and work factors that can contribute to burnout include:

- Unmanageable workloads
- Unfair treatment at work
- Confusing work responsibilities
- Lack of communication or support from managers
- Immense deadline pressure
- Too much work, not enough time to rest (downtime)
- A feeling that work or life is out of your control
- Feeling unrecognized or unrewarded
- Work or responsibilities that feel too demanding
- Boring or routine work, or chaotic or high-stress work
- Taking on too much without asking for help
- Lack of sleep
- Few supportive or meaningful relationships
- Personality traits such as perfectionism, pessimism, and a need for control

Many burnout symptoms can feel like symptoms of stress, but there are three ways to differentiate them.

- Feeling tired, or exhausted
- No enthusiasm, and feelings of negativity toward your job
- Inability to perform your job



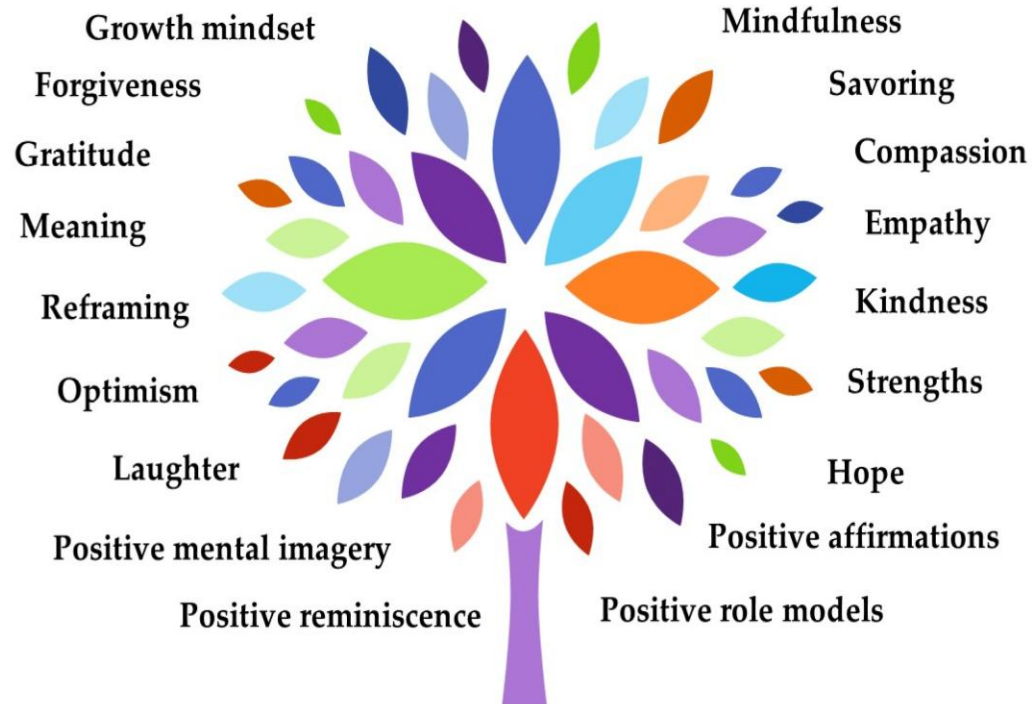
How can I manage my stress and improve my well being?

Use your strengths and skills to make a positive plan to address stressful events in your life and your coping mechanisms.

Whether your stress is internal or external, **relaxation techniques can help you manage stress and boost your ability to cope.**

There are many different techniques, and it's important you find the ones that work for you!

Let's Start this journey together!



The science of mind-body intervention (MBIs): why it matters to you and your school

MBIs are evidence-based practices that integrate **psychological and physiological processes to enhance well-being**. These interventions include **mindfulness, meditation, yoga, tai chi, relaxation and biodance**, among others.

Research* has demonstrated that MBIs can significantly improve **mental health, cognitive function, and overall resilience**—benefits that are particularly relevant for students and educators in school settings.

*For a deep understanding:

- *Kabat-Zinn, J. (2003). "Mindfulness-Based Interventions in Context: Past, Present, and Future." Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice.*
- *Davidson, R. J., & McEwen, B. S. (2012). "Social Influences on Neuroplasticity: Stress and Interventions to Promote Well-Being." Nature Neuroscience.*
- *Benson, H., & Proctor, W. (2010). Relaxation Revolution: The Science and Genetics of Mind Body Healing.*



What research has proven about Mind-Body Interventions

Scientific studies have shown that MBIs positively impact various aspects of health and learning:

Reduced Stress and Anxiety

- Studies have found that mindfulness and meditation decrease cortisol levels, the hormone associated with stress.
- Regular practice can lower symptoms of anxiety and depression, improving emotional regulation.

Enhanced Cognitive Function and Academic Performance

- MBIs have been linked to improved attention, working memory, and executive functioning.
- Research suggests students who practice mindfulness score higher on standardized tests and have better problem-solving skills.

Improved Physical Health

- Yoga and tai chi enhance flexibility, balance, and cardiovascular health.
- Mindfulness-based interventions have been associated with stronger immune system responses.

Better Classroom Behavior and Emotional Regulation

- Mindfulness and breathing exercises can help students manage their emotions, reducing disruptive behaviors.
- Increased self-awareness and emotional intelligence contribute to more positive peer interactions.

Teacher Well-Being and Burnout Prevention

- Educators who engage in MBIs report lower levels of stress and burnout.
- Mindfulness training enhances job satisfaction and resilience among teachers.

Let's close the morning with the Body Scan Meditation

Body scan meditation can be especially useful for reducing chronic pain or dealing with tension, stress, or trauma.

Let's start at your toes, take a few moments to focus on how they feel when they're grounded on the floor. Then, move through your legs, chest, arms, shoulders, neck, and head, slowly noticing the sensations of each body part.

Let's feel the entire body.

Don't forget to deeply breathe

Be aware now about the space around you.

Let's begin by moving your toes and fingers, continuing to breathe.

Bring your hands together in front of your heart, slowly open your eyes, and give thanks.



Day 2

Let's start with Energy

Stand up, take off your shoes, and rock back and forth between your toes and heels. Spread your toes wide, trying to move them and feel them in contact with the ground.

Stamp your feet on the ground with conviction, and either silently or out loud, repeat:

"I am here, I am fully present. I am a mountain."

Slightly bend your knees and align your feet with your hips. Shift all your weight onto your feet, feeling stable and strong. Take three breaths, and as you exhale, make a sound to release the breath.



Mindfulness-based stress reduction

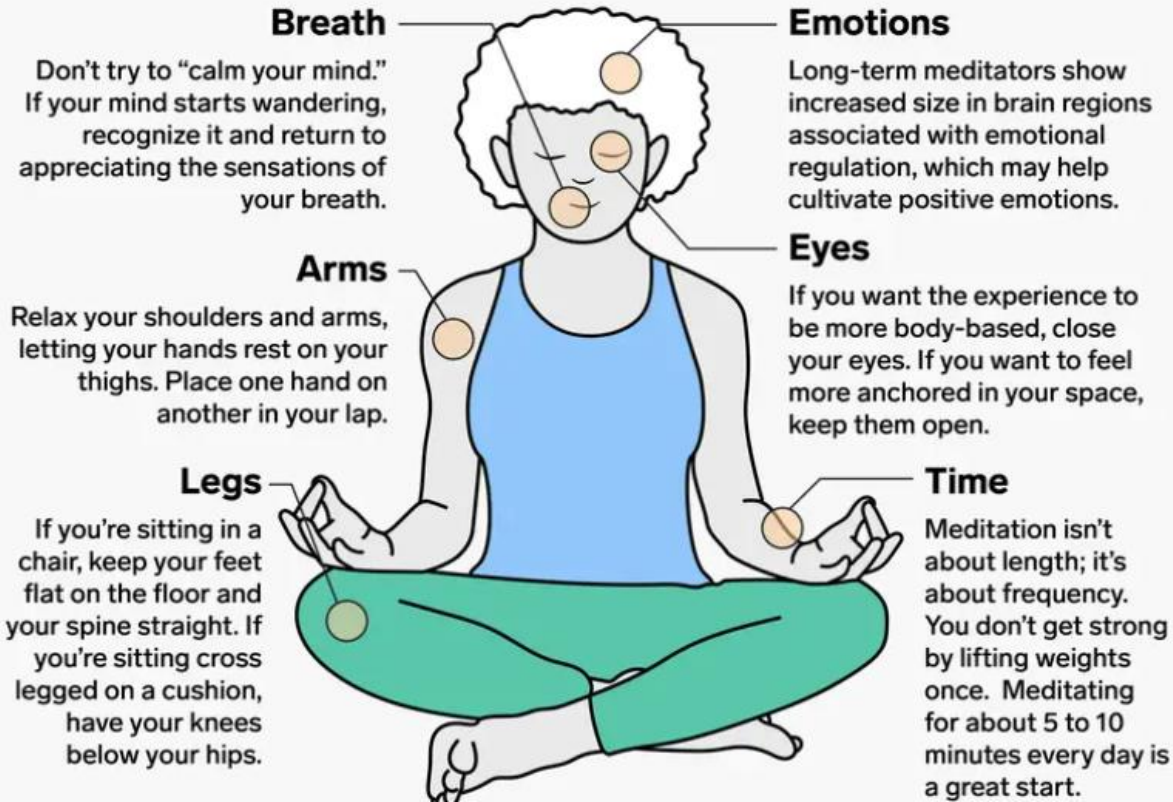
Meditation is the practice of training your attention and focus from a place of non-judgement

Incorporating meditation into your self-care routine is a powerful way to nurture your mental, emotional, and physical health

Be kind with yourself



Intro to relaxation technique



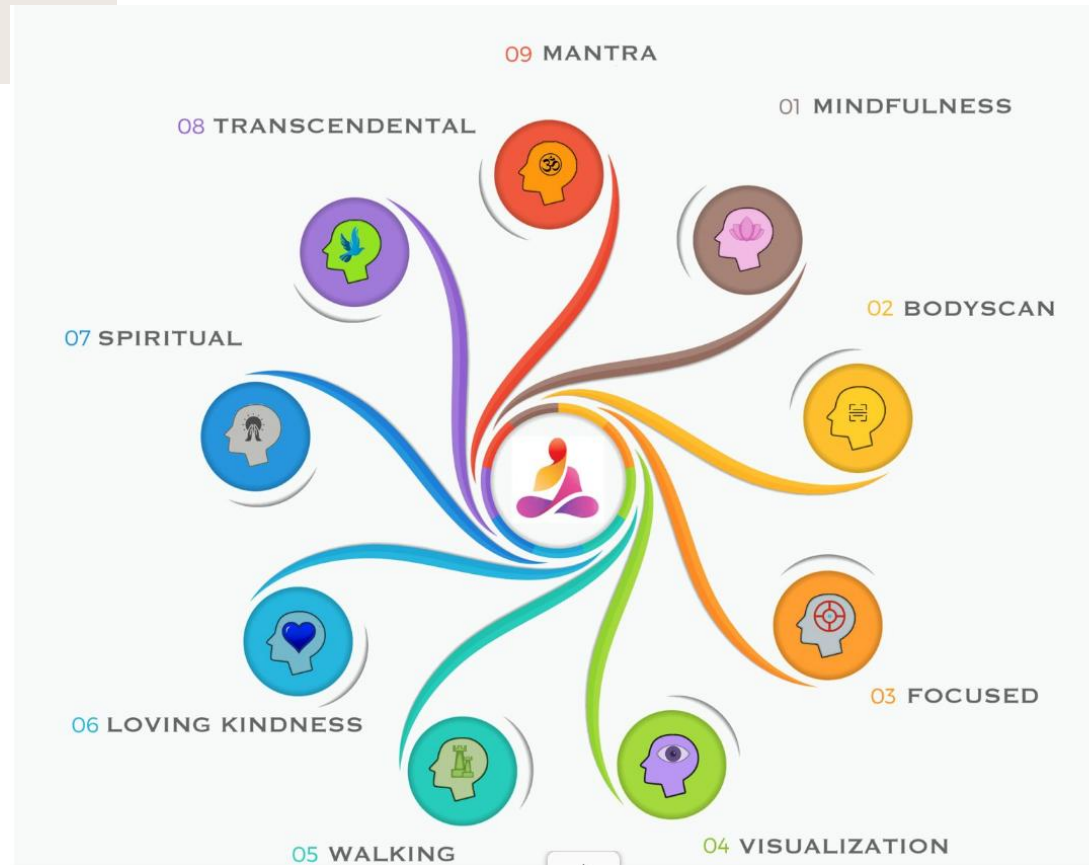
Your inner peace and power

Meditating for just 5 to 10 minutes each day is an achievement to be proud of!

Benefits of meditation

Research has found that meditation can improve your mental and physical health in a variety of ways. Here are six science-backed benefits of meditation:

1. **Better focus and concentration**
2. **Improve self-esteem and self-awareness.** Self-observation without judgement
3. **Reduce stress.** Meditation can lower levels of cortisol — the stress hormone — and help you feel calmer and more relaxed.
4. **Help manage anxiety or depression.**
5. **Control pain.**
6. **Promote altruistic behavior.** Some studies have found that meditation may even reduce implicit bias and fight against racial prejudice.





Walking Meditation

A walking meditation is a form of **mindfulness** practice that involves walking slowly and deliberately while focusing your attention on the **physical experience** of each step, your breath, and your surroundings.

The only rules are:

- Be in **silence**
- Walk **slowly** and mindfully
- Be **disconnected** from your mobile phone/e-watch/electronic device

Walking Meditation: physical, mental, and emotional benefits

- Reduces **Stress and Anxiety**.
- Improves **Focus** and Mental Clarity
- Boosts Emotional Well-Being (**emotional regulation**)
- Promotes **Physical Health**. Walking is a low-impact, full-body exercise that improves cardiovascular health, boosts circulation, and strengthens muscles and bones.
- Enhances **Creativity**. The movement of walking stimulates blood flow to the brain, which can enhance creativity.



- Deepens **Mind-Body Connection**. Walking meditation helps you become more aware of your body, its movements, and the sensations you experience.

Walking Meditation: physical, mental, and emotional benefits

- **Boosts Resilience and Patience.** Walking meditation encourages people and the acceptance of the present moment, helping to build emotional resilience over time.
- **Strengthens Mindfulness Practice.** It offers a way to bring mindfulness into everyday life.
- **Improves Sleep Quality.** It calms the nervous system and reduces the physical tension that may disrupt sleep.
- **Grounding and Connection with Nature**



Walking Meditation



Andiamo! Amunì!
Let's go!

What does Happiness mean for You?



Stick your notes or your
draws on the board/wall and
take a moment to read
others' responses.

Eudaimonia

For the philosopher Aristotle, happiness was not about pleasure or short-term emotions, but about:

- *Living well over a whole lifetime*
- *Developing virtues like wisdom, courage, and moderation*

*The Ancient Greeks didn't think of happiness as just a feeling. They used the concept of **Eudaimonia**.*

The word **Eudaimonia** comes from:

“**eu**” = good

“**daimon**” = spirit or guiding force

👉 “having a good guiding spirit” or “being well guided by one’s inner spirit.”

Eudaimonia is often translated as “happiness” or “flourishing”, but it means something deeper:

- *Living a **meaningful and virtuous life***
- *Fulfilling one’s potential*
- *Acting in accordance with **reason and excellence (virtue)***

Happiness

Reducing happiness to the simplest possible terms

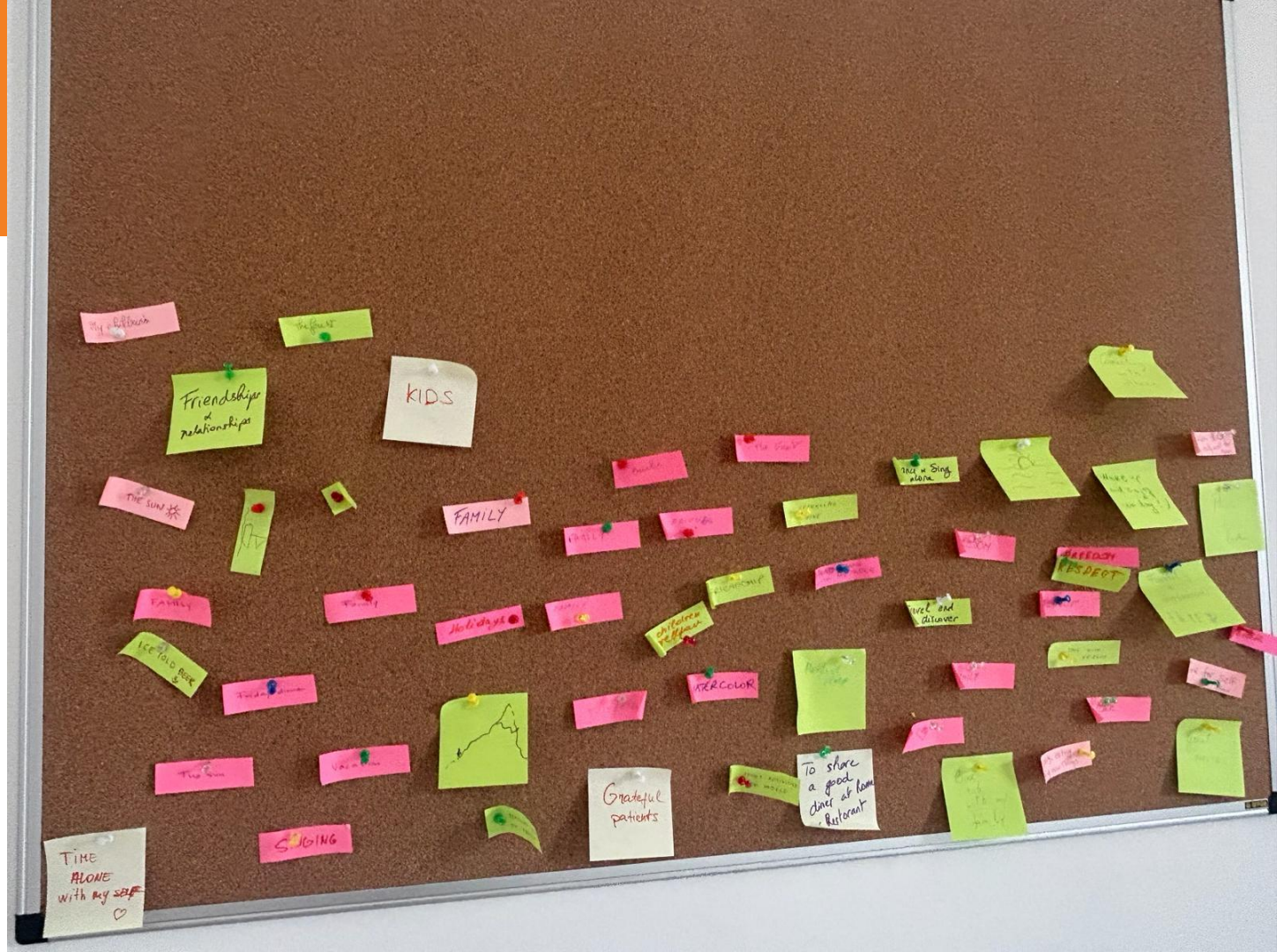
happiness = enjoyment + satisfaction + meaning

Enjoyment is related to pleasure, but it isn't the same thing. It involves things that give you pleasure, plus a measure of elevation or education. (So for example, alcohol might give you a pleasure but understanding good wine can give you enjoyment)

Satisfaction comes not from having what you want but wanting what you have. Some people have everything in the world and are never satisfied. That's because your satisfaction is what you have divided by what you want.

Meaning, the sense of life's value. You've heard the old saying, "no pain, no gain... people tend to get the greatest sense of their life's meaning when they have faced hardship. And we need meaning for true happiness. So in a paradoxical way, happiness requires some amount of unhappiness.

Your Happiness board



What are your happiness Boosters?

*Exercise:
Experience
and start 1
of this
happiness
booster and
bring it with
you*

*(15 minutes
exercise)*

- **Vision Board** – Create a collage of images, words, and symbols that represent your dreams and goals to inspire motivation and positivity.
- **Letter from the Future** – Write a letter to yourself from a future version of you, describing your achievements and happiness as if they have already happened.
- **Gratitude Journal** – Regularly write down things you're grateful for to cultivate a positive mindset and increase overall happiness.

Scripta Manent, Verba Volant

Written words endure over time and can be preserved, while spoken words are temporary and easily forgotten

**Let's
meditate
together**



The Loving Kindness Meditation

Try thinking about someone else in your head.

Then, say this phrase aloud:

"May you be happy. May you be healthy. May you be safe."

You can direct these positive thoughts toward yourself, someone you love, or someone you don't particularly like at the moment.

In fact, loving kindness meditation has been found to help improve self-esteem and even resolve conflicts.



Essences for your meditations

Incense of siam benzoin, is a resin obtained from the *Styrax tonkinensis* tree, native to regions like **Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, and Cambodia**. It has been used for centuries in perfumery, traditional medicine, and religious rituals due to its aromatic and therapeutic properties.

Benefits:

- Stress and Anxiety Relief
- Energy Cleansing
- Improved Focus and Concentration
- Enhanced Meditation and Spiritual Connection
- The **sacred aroma** supports mindfulness practices, such as meditation, yoga, or prayer.
- **Sleep Support:** burning it before bedtime may reduce restlessness and promote deeper sleep.
- **Grounding and Centering:** helping you feel more balanced and connected to the present moment.

Palo santo, also known as “**holy wood**,” has been cherished in **South America** for centuries. It has been known for its healing and spiritual properties.

Benefits:

- **Emotional Balance** and Relaxation
- **Aromatherapy Benefits:** uplift the spirit, reduce fatigue, and improve focus
- **Enhanced Meditation** and Prayer:
- Air Purification
- **Mood booster:** The aroma has uplifting effects, reducing feelings of sadness, stress, or anxiety
- **Insect Repellent:** The smoke acts as a natural insect deterrent
- **Cultural and Spiritual Significance:** Palo Santo has been used by indigenous communities for centuries in rituals to honor the spirit world and bring blessings

Day 3

Breathing techniques (Pranayama)

Ballon Breathing Technique

Balloon Breathing



breathe in & breathe out

©SITWITHKELLY

Sit or stand in a comfortable, relaxed position with your spine erect.

Inhale slowly through your nose to the count of 5. Imagine a ball or balloon in your belly inflating

Hold the breathe in the ball or balloon in your belly for 5-10 seconds.

Count slowly to 8 as you exhale.

Repeat this 3 times.

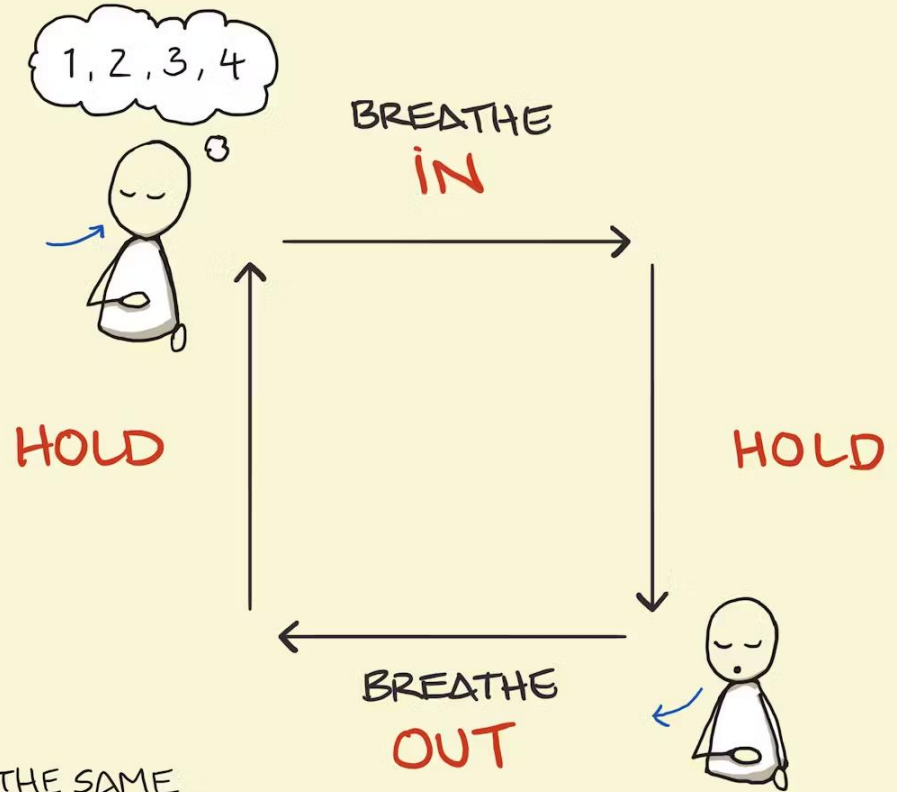
TIP – As you breathe, let your abdomen expand outward, rather than raising your shoulders. This is a more relaxed, natural way to breathe and helps your lungs fill themselves more fully with fresh air.

Breathing techniques (Pranayama)

**Box breathing is a form of
yogic deep breathing**

The biggest benefit of box breathing is relaxation, especially in times of stress. Studies show that regulating your breath can lower levels of the stress hormone cortisol and maybe even help lower blood pressure.

BOX BREATHING



DO THE SAME
COUNT ON EACH SIDE

sketchplanations

Sensory Immersion Walk in Erice

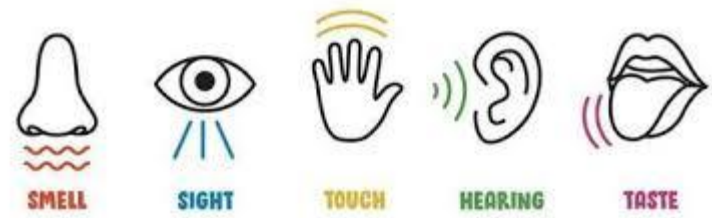
A Sensory Immersion Walk is a **mindful nature-based activity** that encourages individuals to fully engage their five senses—**sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste** (when safe)—to connect deeply with the environment.



Benefits of a Sensory Immersion Walk

- **Reduces Stress and Anxiety:**
Activates the parasympathetic nervous system, promoting calmness.
- **Improves Mental Clarity and Focus**
Sharpening sensory awareness can increase present-moment focus.
- **Boosts Mood and Well-being**
Natural environments have been shown to elevate mood and reduce depression.
- **Enhances Connection to Nature**
Deepens appreciation for the environment and encourages eco-awareness.
- **Stimulates Creativity**
Engaging the senses can inspire new thoughts, insights, and ideas.

Instruction fo a Sensory Immersion Walk



1. Choose a Natural Setting

Pick a park, forest trail, beach, or garden where you can walk undisturbed.

2. Leave Distractions Behind

Turn off your phone or put it on silent. Avoid listening to music or talking.

3. Set an Intention

Begin by setting an intention to be present and open to your environment.

4. Walk Slowly and Silently

Move at a slower pace than usual. Walk in silence, pausing often.

5. Engage Each Sense

- Sight: Notice colors, shapes, light patterns, and movement.
- Sound: Listen to birds, wind, footsteps, rustling leaves.
- Smell: Inhale deeply and identify scents (earth, flowers, rain).
- Touch: Feel tree bark, rocks, leaves, or soil.
- Taste (if safe): Taste the air or edible plants

6. Pause and Reflect

Stop occasionally to absorb the moment. You can close your eyes to heighten non-visual senses.

7. Optional: Journal Afterwards: write down what you experienced and how it made you feel.



Tree Meditation for Children

Day 5

Let's take a journey in our inner world using our imagination.

Let's place our hands gently on our eyes...And imagine the warm sun shining on our skin.

Can you feel it? That soft, golden warmth on your face, your arms, your whole body...

Let's take a slow, deep breath in...And breathe out gently, like the breeze through the trees.

Now, slowly lower your hands and let them rest where they feel comfortable.

Keep your eyes closed if you like, and imagine that you are standing in a wide, peaceful forest.

Now, gently raise your hands and imagine there is wind blowing and it sways you from side to side.

You gently move in a beautiful dance swaying with the wind...

A journey into our inner world

Take a deep breath in and breath out and feel you are getting strong inside. And as you get stronger, the wind gets stronger, swaying you even harder. As you dance with the wind, you stay grounded and strong.

Now, imagine the wind is slowing down and your body becomes stiller and calmer as the wind quietens... You breathe deeply.

Life is so good, and you feel peaceful.

Take a moment just to feel gratitude for all the love and caring that surrounds you

You are now ready to start your day!

Let's start to let Energy flow

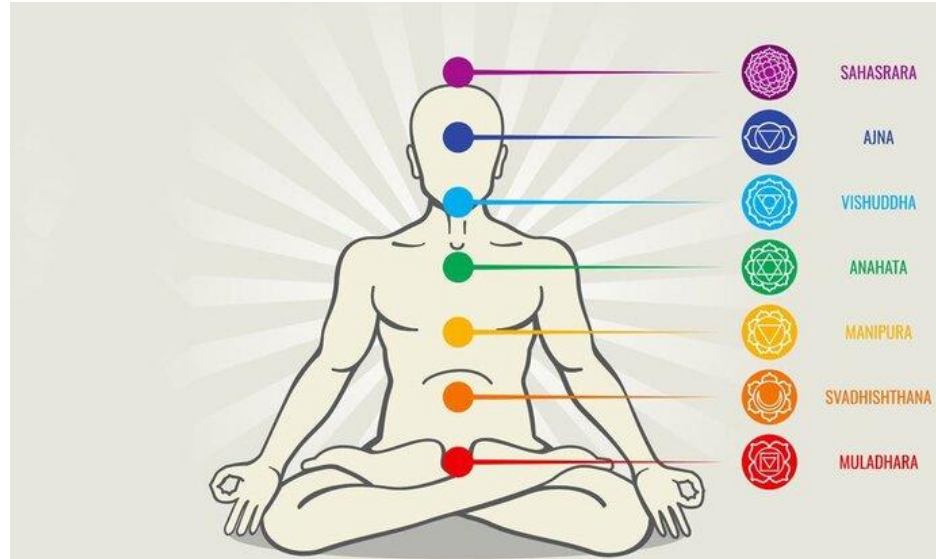
In many spiritual traditions (especially yoga and Ayurveda), **chakras are believed to be energy centers in the body.**

The word chakra means **wheel, they're thought of as spinning wheels of energy that run along your spine, from the base to the top of your head.**

Letting energy flow helps:

- Emotions move instead of getting stuck
- Stress release instead of piling upSelf-expression and healing
- A sense of harmony between body, mind, and spirit

Practices like meditation, yoga, breathwork, movement, sound, time in nature, and honest self-reflection are often used to help restore this flow.



Games: simple tips for involving more movement in your life and in class

The flower and the butterfly



Day 4

Let's move our body with care, kindness and creativity

Let's warm up our bodies by forming a circle and walking, first slowly, then gradually increasing the intensity of our steps.

Start moving your hands, arms, shoulders, and slowly your neck. Then, move your hips.

Now, stop and turn to your left. The person behind you will be your partner.

Let's play the **mirror game**. Look each other in the eyes; one of you leads the movement while the other follows. Don't watch the movement—focus on their eyes.

Now switch roles: the other person leads, and their partner follows.

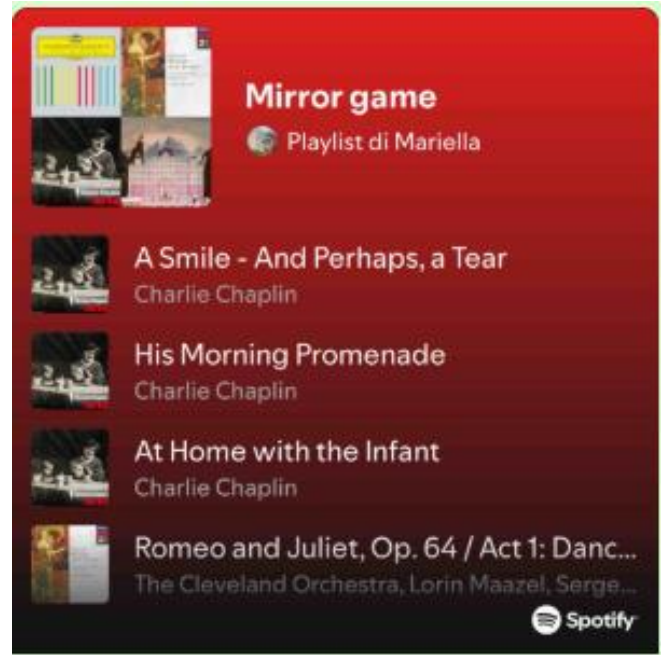
Have fun and let yourselves be guided!



Biodanza and Mirror game playlist on Spotify

Biodanza and Mirror game

https://open.spotify.com/playlist/3vHeDiJ7841O8oEncpPKky?si=E0zH_7TFsJSyKCy8OXjeJw&pi=xOdWWz_XSHuVv



Mirror game
Playlist di Mariella

- A Smile - And Perhaps, a Tear
Charlie Chaplin
- His Morning Promenade
Charlie Chaplin
- At Home with the Infant
Charlie Chaplin
- Romeo and Juliet, Op. 64 / Act 1: Danc...
The Cleveland Orchestra, Lorin Maazel, Serge...

Biodanza and Mirror game
Playlist · Mariella · 12 items
open.spotify.com

Do you dance?

Let's enjoy the Bio dance

Benefits of Biodanza

- **Emotional release and expression** – Helps release blocked emotions and express feelings safely.
- **Stress reduction** – Engaging in rhythmic movement and connection relaxes the nervous system.
- **Improved self-esteem** – Encourages body acceptance and a stronger sense of identity.
- **Enhanced social bonds** – Builds empathy and connection through non-verbal interaction.
- **Vitality and joy** – Increases energy and promotes a sense of aliveness.
- **Mind-body integration** – Encourages harmony between thought, feeling, and action.

Biodanza is a system of **self-development that uses music, movement, and group dynamics to promote physical and emotional well-being.**

Created by **Rolando Toro Araneda** in the 1960s in Chile, the word Biodanza means

Bio – from the Greek bios (βίος), meaning "life."


Danza – from the Spanish and Italian word for "dance."


So, Biodanza literally means "**the dance of life.**"


It combines **music, dance,** and **authentic human connection** to awaken our instincts for joy, love, and vitality.




What Neuroscience says about the benefits of dance for the brain and overall mental health

 **Boosts Brain Plasticity.** Dance stimulates **neuroplasticity, the brain's ability to rewire and adapt.** Learning choreography requires memory, coordination, and focus—all of which encourage the formation of new neural connections, especially between the motor, sensory, and cognitive systems.

 **Enhances Memory and Cognitive Function.** Studies show that older adults who dance regularly have better memory and **reduced risk of dementia.** A 2003 study in The New England Journal of Medicine found that dancing reduced dementia risk by 76%, more than any other physical activity studied.

 **Improves Mood and Emotional Health.** Dance activates the **dopamine and serotonin systems,** which are involved in pleasure and mood regulation. Dance therapy is used to help treat depression, anxiety and even Parkinson's disease.

 **Integrates Multiple Brain Regions.** Dancing combines: **Music** processing (auditory cortex), **Movement** (motor cortex, cerebellum), **Emotion** (limbic system), **Decision-making** (prefrontal cortex). This multi-system activation improves overall brain integration and resilience.



Are you breathing?

Six benefits for your stress relief

- Activates the **Parasympathetic Nervous System**
- ✓ Deep breathing signals the body to switch **from "fight or flight" mode** (sympathetic nervous system) to **"rest and digest"** mode (parasympathetic nervous system). This **lowers heart rate**, reduces blood pressure, and creates a sense of calm;
- **Reduces Cortisol Levels** (Stress Hormone)
- ✓ Slow, controlled breathing decreases cortisol production, preventing chronic stress-related issues like anxiety, fatigue, and inflammation;
- **Enhances Oxygen Flow to the Brain**
- ✓ Proper breathing improves oxygen delivery, which helps in **clear thinking, better decision-making, and emotional balance**;
- Improves **Emotional Regulation**
- ✓ Mindful breathing creates a pause between stressful stimuli and reaction, allowing for better emotional control and **reducing impulsive responses**.
- Boosts **Relaxation & Sleep Quality**
- ✓ Techniques like diaphragmatic breathing together with yoga **slow down brain activity**, making it easier to fall asleep and enjoy deeper rest.
- **Relieves Muscle Tension & Physical Stress**
- ✓ Shallow breathing can cause tightness in the shoulders, neck, and chest. Deep breathing relaxes these muscles, reducing physical stress symptoms

Breathing techniques (Pranayama)

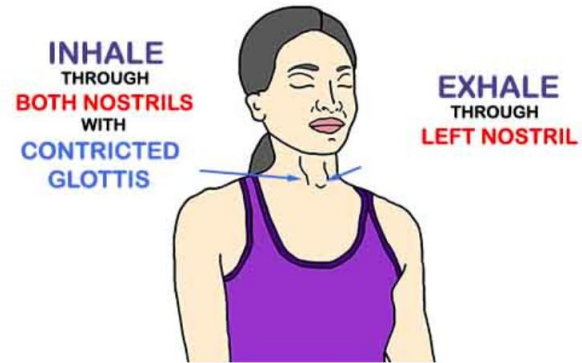
Ujjayi Breathing (Victorious Breath)

Also called "Ocean Breath" due to its gentle, wave-like sound.

Involves inhaling and exhaling through the nose while slightly constricting the throat.

Helps calm the mind, increase focus, and regulate breath during asana practice.

UJJAYI PRANAYAMA THE PSYCHIC BREATH



Breathing techniques (Pranayama)

Nadi Shodhana (Alternate Nostril Breathing)



A balancing breath technique where you inhale through one nostril, exhale through the other, alternating sides

- *Promotes mental clarity, reduces stress, and balances the nervous system.*
- *Often used as a preparatory practice for meditation.*

Breathing techniques (Pranayama)

Kapalabhati (Skull-Shining Breath)

A powerful, rhythmic breathing technique involving forceful exhalations and passive inhalations.

Helps detoxify the lungs, energize the body, and improve oxygen supply.

Used to awaken inner heat and boost vitality

KAPALBHATI PRANAYAMA SKULL SHINING BREATH

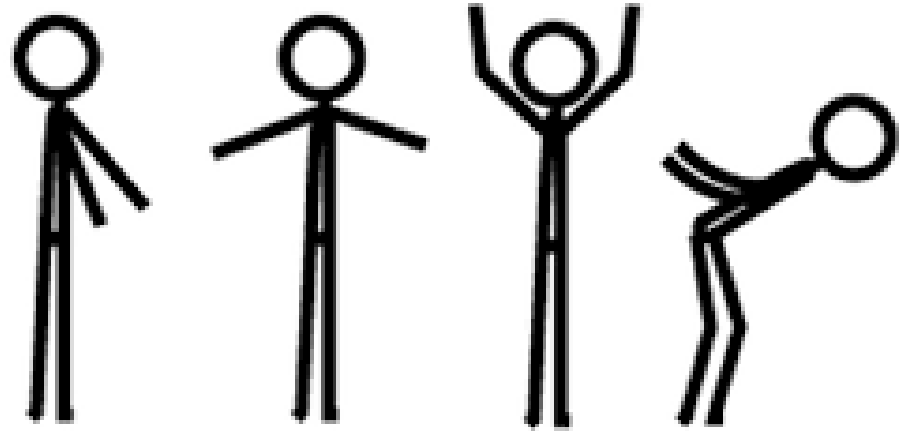


Breathing techniques (Pranayama)

Joy breathing with
active body posture

Breath of Joy is an energizing, three-part inhalation technique paired with arm movements that instantly lifts mood, boosts energy, and reduces fatigue.

It increases oxygen, improves circulation, and releases tension, acting as a "reset" for both mind and body to combat sluggishness and depression.



Front - Side - Up - Ha!
Inhale - Inhale - Inhale - Exhale

Teaching with active listening and empathy (empathia from em- 'in' + pathos 'feeling')

Pair activity

If You Knew...

- What was the **happiest moment** in your life?
- What **motivates** you to get up in the morning?
- Who is the **most important person** in your life?
- Describe the **craziest thing** you have done in the last years.



Once everyone is ready to get started, each participant has 3 minutes to go into as much detail as possible about the answers given by the partner.

What Is Chair Yoga?

Chair yoga is a modified form of yoga that involves practicing asanas (poses) and pranayama (breathing exercises) while seated on a chair or using the chair for support.

It is designed to **make yoga accessible to individuals with limited mobility** or those who have difficulty standing for extended periods.

What are the main benefits?

Improved flexibility and reduced stiffness. Chair yoga helps to stretch the muscles and increase flexibility, reduce stiffness in the joints, and improve overall mobility.

Enhanced strength and stability. A lot of poses help to build strength and stability by maintaining alignment against the resistance of gravity and bodyweight.

Better posture and alignment. Chair yoga helps to improve core strength and stretch the posterior chain, including the muscles in the back and shoulders. It also helps to raise awareness of alignment.

Reduced stress and anxiety. Yoga practice involves breathwork and meditation which can positively benefit stress and anxiety levels. Bringing these elements into your everyday life can also help to reduce your response to everyday stress and build your mental resilience.

Enhanced circulation. While chair yoga is unlikely to count as high intensity cardio, the different poses can help to increase circulation which is good for cardio health.

CHAIR YOGA EXERCISES FOR BEGINNERS



This gentle full body flow is suitable for beginners, seniors and those with limited mobility.

1. Cat-cow



2. Raised hands pose



3. Forward bend



4. Extended side angle



5. Pigeon



6. Eagle



7. Spinal twist



8. Warrior I



9. Warrior II



10. Reverse warrior



11. Savasana

Anxiety Relief Meditation (5-10 Minutes)

Step 1: Grounding with Breath

Take a deep breath in through your nose... hold for a moment... and exhale slowly through your mouth.

Let's do this two more times. Inhale... hold... and exhale.

One more time—breathe in deeply... and let it go.

Step 2: Body Awareness

Now, gently bring your attention to your body. Notice any areas of tension.

With each exhale, imagine releasing any tightness.

Relax your shoulders... your jaw... your hands.

Step 3: Letting Go of Anxiety

Now, visualize a warm, calming light surrounding you.

With every inhale, imagine this light filling you with peace.

With every exhale, imagine releasing any stress or worries.

If anxious thoughts arise, acknowledge them without judgment.

Imagine placing them onto a cloud and watching them drift away.

Step 4: Affirmation & Closing

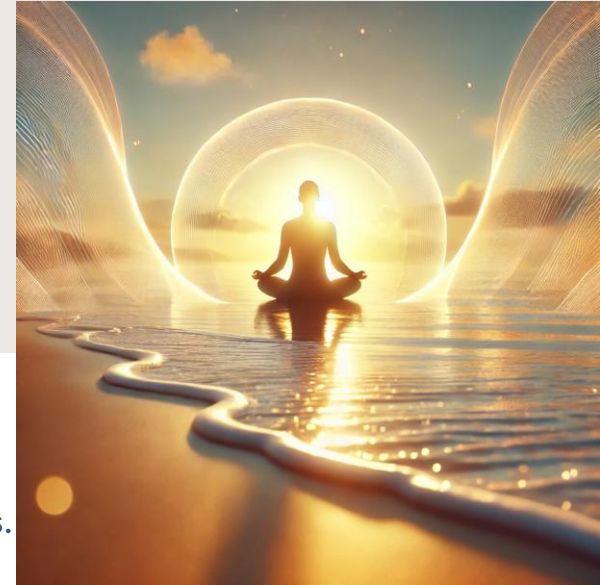
Silently repeat to yourself:

- ✓ "I am safe in this moment."
- ✓ "I am calm, I am at peace."
- ✓ "I release what I cannot control."

Take one final deep breath in... and slowly exhale.

When you're ready, gently wiggle your fingers and toes, and slowly open your eyes.

You are now calm and centered. 🌿 ✨





Arden Stock | 11/11/14

"Namaste" is a respectful greeting commonly used in India and other parts of South Asia.

It's derived from Sanskrit, and it literally means:

"Namah" = bow, reverence

"Te" = to you

So, "Namaste" can be translated as **"I bow to you" or "I honor the divine in you"**

It's often used as a **greeting or farewell** with hands pressed together at the chest (🙏) and a slight bow. In spiritual or yoga contexts, it can carry **deeper meaning**—acknowledging the soul or divine spark within another person.

Day 5

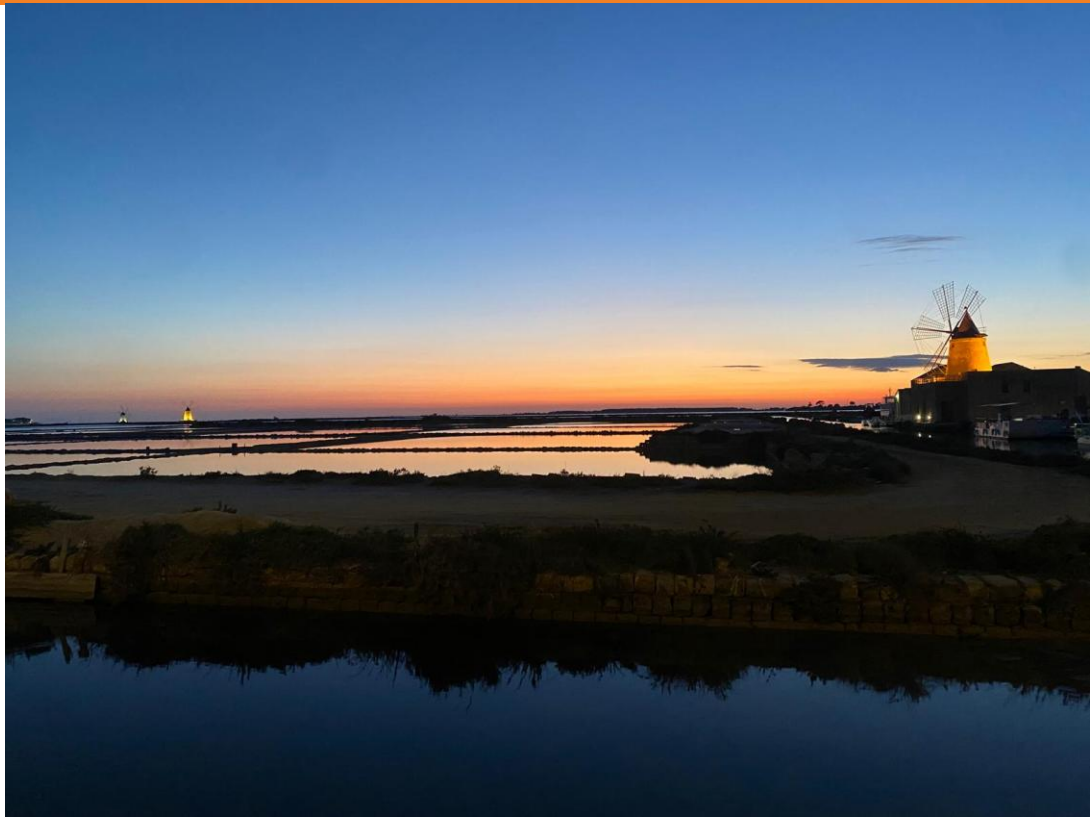
The Do Nothing Meditation

Allow yourself to simply be, without trying to control your thoughts, breath, or body—just sit and observe.

If thoughts arise, let them come and go naturally, like clouds drifting across the sky, without engaging or resisting them.

There is no goal, no effort, and nothing to achieve—just rest in the present moment as it is.

If you catch yourself trying to meditate, gently let go of even that effort and return to doing absolutely nothing.



Let art be your guide to stress relief

Anxiety, grounding, & mindfulness

Grounding exercises help reconnect with the present moment, reducing anxiety and stress.

Research shows that art-making activates **sensory-motor pathways**, fostering a sense of stability and calm. This exercise uses **symbolic imagery** to deepen grounding and **emotional resilience**.



Grounding yourself through art

SUGGESTED AGE: 6+

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- paper (any size, type, color)
- drawing materials (suggested: markers, crayons, colored pencils)

Therapeutic Benefits

- Encourages mindfulness and present-moment awareness
- Symbolically connects emotions to grounding elements
- Promotes self-awareness and inner balance

Grounding & breath awareness

Sit comfortably with your feet flat on the ground.

1. Close your eyes and take a deep breath in... hold... exhale slowly. Repeat 3 times.

Creative expression

Choose a drawing tool.

1. Without lifting your hand, draw loops, swirls, and lines freely.
2. The more your lines cross, the more spaces you'll have to color.
3. Each piece will be unique—there's no right or wrong way!



**Do you know the Emotional
Freedom Technique (EFT)?**

Introduction to Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT)

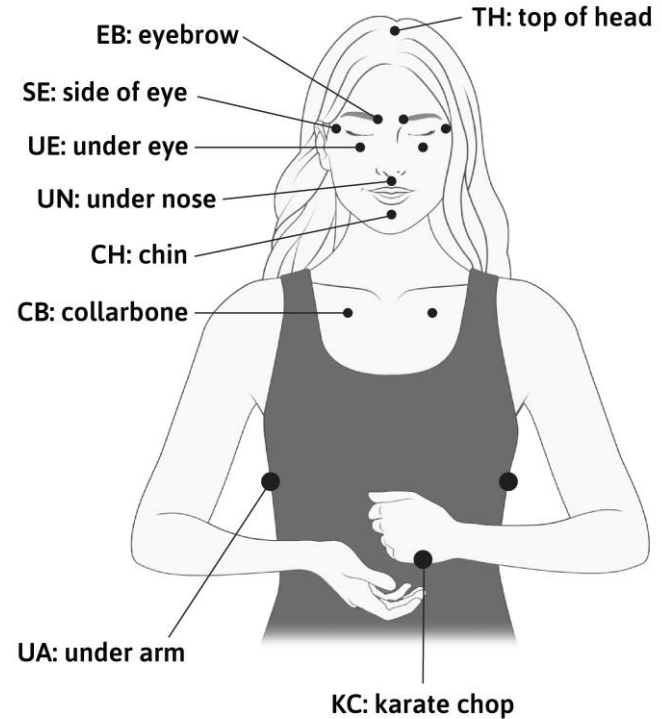
Also known as tapping, EFT is a type of mental health therapy that you can use to control your thoughts, manage stress, and regulate emotions.

*It is based on **meridians** (Chinese Medicine): when energies are flowing, we are in a state of balance and all the meridians are open.*

*When we are in a state of fear, stress, blocks can happen, and the **energy channels are blocked** in certain point of the body.*

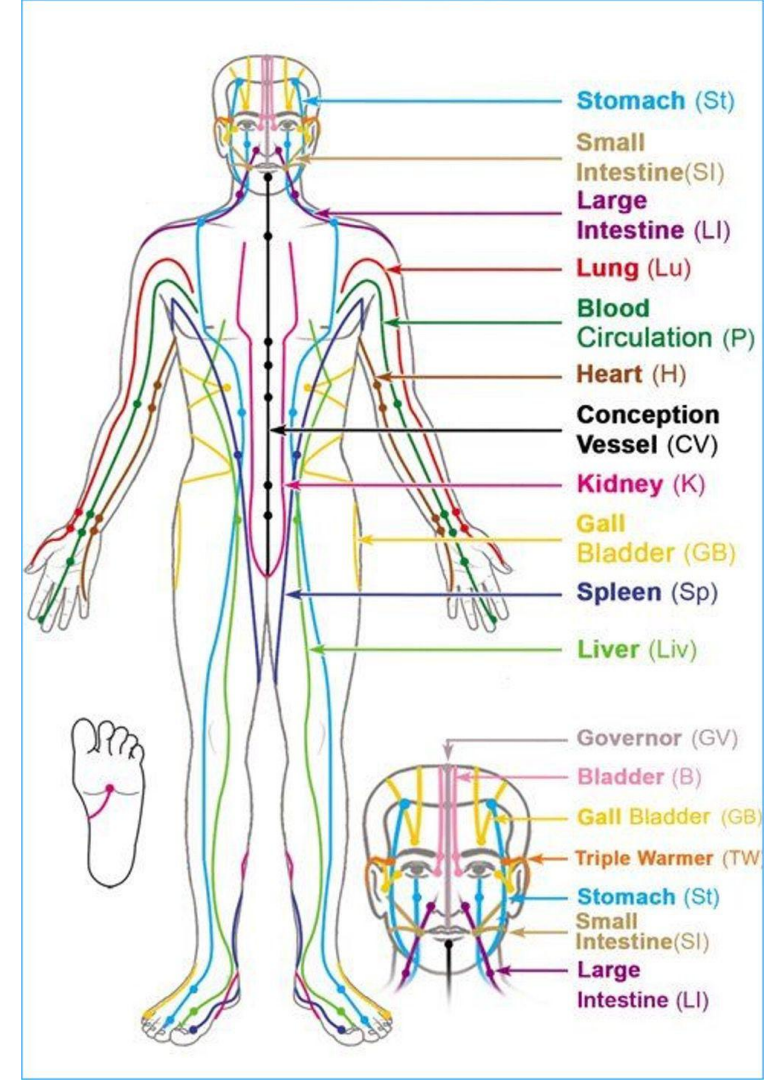
So, with EFT we want to continue to have the flow. We stimulate that part that feels stuck to rebalance the body.

Tapping Points



● Tapping draws from the **ancient Chinese practice of acupuncture**, which teaches that the body's energy flows along specific pathways. Stimulating certain points on these pathways is believed to improve the flow of energy. This stimulation can be achieved by inserting very thin needles (as in acupuncture) or by applying pressure (as in acupressure).

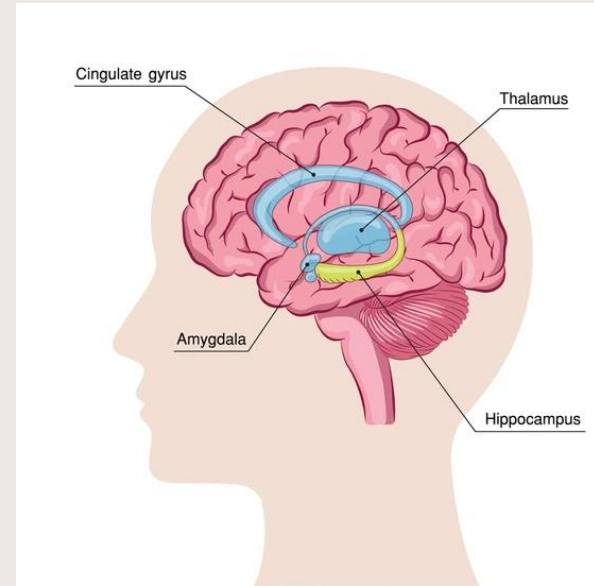
- There are 12 primary meridians in the body, each named for the main organ or system they serve.
- These meridians appear as separate segments but are interconnected beneath the skin. Each meridian is associated with a specific time when its energy is strongest and specific emotions.
- Each meridian is linked to a specific organ and has a distinctive function that supports our overall well-being. Energy flowing through these meridians is thought to influence our physical, emotional, and spiritual health.
- When a meridian is imbalanced, it can cause various symptoms and health problems. By knowing the functions and optimal energy times of each meridian, we can improve our health and rebalance our body's energy system.



Some Scientific Evidences of the Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT)

- *Tapping on therapeutic points increased **amygdala activation** and decreased **hippocampal activation** in participants with a fear of flying.*
- *EFT tapping has demonstrated effectiveness in treating PTSD among veterans and has shown promise in reducing anxiety and increasing self-esteem*
- Reduces Stress and Anxiety
- Decreases Physiological Symptoms
- Boosts Focus and Performance
- Decrease in the severity and intensity of pain
- Reduced psychological distress
- Improvements in happiness and life satisfaction

Tapping is a safe and noninvasive practice



EFT in 5 steps

1) Identify the issue

In order for this technique to be effective, you must first identify the issue or fear you have. This will be your focal point while you're tapping. Focusing on only one problem at a time is purported to enhance your outcome.

2) Test the initial intensity

After you identify your problem area, you need to set a benchmark level of intensity. The intensity level is rated on a scale from 0 to 10, with 10 being the worst or most difficult.

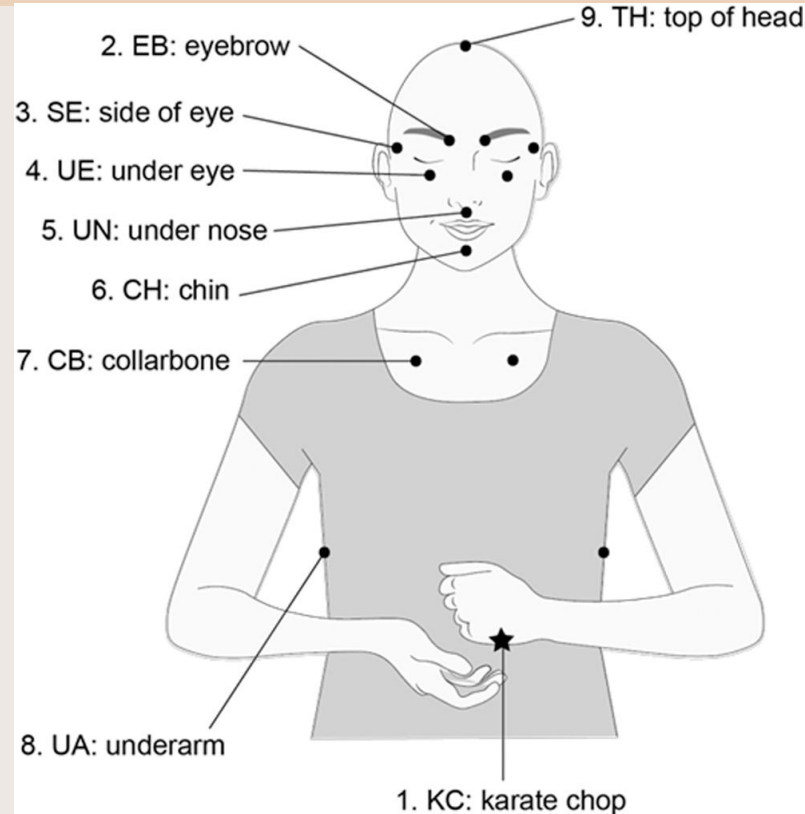
The scale assesses the emotional or physical pain and discomfort you feel from your focal issue.

3) The setup

Prior to tapping, you need to establish a phrase that explains what you're trying to address. It must focus on two main goals: acknowledging the issues accepting yourself despite the problem

4) EFT tapping sequence: EFT mainly focuses on these nine points/meridians.

5) Test the final intensity: on a scale from 0 to 10.

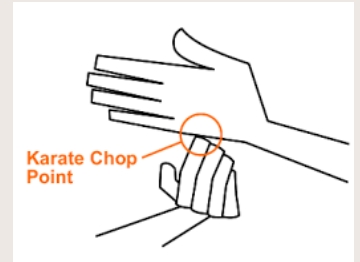


Let's practice EFT together

Before starting, take a moment to get comfortable. Take a couple of deep breaths in and out and **assess your current stress level on a scale from 0 to 10.**

Now, take one of your hands—either one—and use 1 or 2 fingers to tap on the side of the other hand (the "karate chop" point). While tapping, repeat the following phrase six times (**X7**):

*Even though I have this stress,
I choose to love and accept myself*



Begin tapping the following points while repeating the sentences at each point:

- **Eye brow point:** **"I feel overwhelmed (with 2 fingers)**
- **Corner of your eyes:** **"there is so much going on and that's ok"** (both corners with 2 fingers)
- **Under your eyes:** **"It is safe to feel this anxiety"** (with 2 fingers)
- **Space between your lips and nose:** **"and it is safe to begin to let it go"** (with 2 fingers)
- **Under your lips (Chin):** **"It is safe to feel this anxiety.** (with 2 fingers)
- **Right below your collarbone:** **"It is safe to feel this anxiety"** (with all 10 fingers)
- **Under your arm:** **"It is safe to feel all this stress"** (with 3 fingers)
- **Top of your head:** **"and it is safe to let it go"** (with 2 fingers)

Finally, lower your hand and take two deep breaths. Pause for a moment, then reassess your stress level on a scale from 0 to 10.

Practice EFT with something that is bothering you

A self-help strategy for stress reduction.

- **Think of something that is bothering you.** It could be anything that is causing you trouble such as stress at work, a loved one's illness, or a past experience that you are having difficulty letting go of.
- **Rate** how this issue makes you feel on a scale of 0 to 10, with 10 being the worst. Then, **write down** how this troubling situation or thought makes you feel.
- **Develop a statement** (also called a setup statement) that describes how you currently feel. Then describe how you want to feel instead. For instance, your statement might be: **Even though I am stressed about the upcoming meeting, I know that I am an intelligent and competent person**
- As you say your statement out loud, tap repeatedly on a certain **pressure point**. This can include the side of your hands, the edge of your eyebrow, the outside of your eye, under the eye, under the nose, the crease between your chin and lip, where your collarbones meet, under the arm, on top of the head.
- **Reassess how you feel** after tapping each point on your body by using the 0 to 10 rating scale.

Are you sleeping well?



How Well Are You Sleeping?

- How long did it take you to fall asleep?
- How often did you sleep badly in the last four weeks?
- How often did you take pills to sleep?

What Do You Know About Sleep?



How Much Sleep Do I Need?

Our minds and bodies need sleep each night to function. Here's **how much sleep we need a day at each age**, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

- 1-2 years old: 11-14 hours
- 3-5 years old: 10-13 hours
- 6-12 years old: 9-12 hours
- 13-18 years old: 8-10 hours
- 18 and older: 7 or more hours per night

Sleep is the undisputed power that can help reset our body and our brains. A good night's sleep can help restore immune function, improve athletic performance, and help regulate body metabolism

According to the **National Sleep Foundation**, between 10-30% of adults have insomnia, and 2-9% have obstructive sleep apnea.

Since some sleep disorders, such as sleep apnea, can contribute to other chronic health conditions, it's important to get treatment but we can build a daily routine and habit for better sleep...

1/2

Daily Routines & Habits for Better Sleep

Morning:

- Wake up at the **same time daily** (even on weekends).
- Get exposure to **sunlight** (when it is possible!) for at least 10–20 minutes.
- Do some light **stretching** or movement.

Afternoon:

- Have a balanced lunch to maintain **steady energy levels**.
- **Avoid excessive caffeine** intake after 2 p.m.
- **Engage in physical activity** but not too close to bedtime.



Daily Routines & Habits for Better Sleep

Evening:

- Eat a **light dinner** 2–3 hours before bed.
- **Reduce screen time** and dim the lights to signal your body it's time to rest.
- Take a **warm bath or shower** to help relax.
- Engage in a **calming pre-bed ritual** like journaling, meditation, or reading

Night time:

- Keep your **bedroom cool**, dark, and quiet.
- **Avoid checking the clock** if you wake up at night.
- Switch the **phone** to '**Flight Mode**' (constant electromagnetic radiation)
- Practice **deep breathing** or a body scan if struggling to fall asleep



Other tips

- Invest in a **good mattress and pillow** – Proper support can improve sleep quality and reduce discomfort.
- **Limit naps** – Keep daytime naps under 30 minutes to avoid interfering with nighttime sleep.
- Reduce **fluid intake in the evening** – Minimize nighttime awakenings by drinking less before bed.
- Use your **bed only for sleep** and relaxation – Avoid working or watching TV in bed.
- **Try aromatherapy** – Scents like lavender and chamomile can promote relaxation.
- **Limit nicotine use** – Nicotine is a stimulant that can interfere with sleep.



Exercises for Better Sleep

4-7-8 Breathing Technique

- Inhale deeply through your nose for **4 seconds**.
- Hold your breath for **7 seconds**.
- Exhale slowly through your mouth for **8 seconds**.
- Repeat this cycle **4–6 times**.

Benefit: Helps activate the parasympathetic nervous system, reducing stress and promoting relaxation before sleep.



Do you laugh enough?



Laughter's Health Benefits

Children can laugh as many as 300 to 400 times a day, while adults often laugh fewer than 10 to 15 times.

1. Laughing can reduce **stress hormones like cortisol** and adrenaline while **boosting** mood-enhancing chemicals such as **endorphins**.
2. **Social Bonding:** Laughter is 30 times more likely to occur in social settings than when alone, showing its role in **building connections and fostering relationships**.
3. **Simulated Laughter is Effective:** The brain cannot differentiate between **fake and genuine laughter**. Simulated laughter in practices like laughter yoga can still produce the same physical and psychological benefits.
4. **Universal Language:** Laughter is one of the few **universal human expressions**, understood across all cultures, languages, and ages.

Let's be children again!

Children laugh frequently because they engage in play.



Laughter yoga: your inner laughter

In 1995 The Indian **Doctor Kataria** decided to write an article called '**Laughter – The Best Medicine**' for a medical journal. Through his research he discovered a large number of modern scientific studies that described in great length the many proven benefits of laughter on the human mind and body. Dr Kataria and his wife Madhuri Kataria entered their local public park and persuaded 4 people to join in the very first 'laughter club'.

As yoga practitioners, Dr Kataria and his wife saw the similarities between **laughter and deep breathing techniques** and incorporated elements of pranayama. The group acted out laughter for 10 minutes. And so, Laughter Yoga came into being, combining yogic deep breathing, stretching, laughter exercises and cultivated **childlike playfulness** that the world has grown to love.

Laughter yoga is a practice that allows anyone to laugh without relying on jokes or humor.

It helps increase the flow of oxygen to the blood and the major organs of the body. It also encourages people to feel liberated and enhances their self-esteem After 10 minutes of laughter Yoga we produce **the hormones of the joy: Endorphins, Dopamine, Serotonin, Oxytocin, Melatonin.**



Tips to trick our brain



- Place your mouth with the corners turned up, in **the Duchenne smile style**. Let your eyes suggest the smile. This way, we trick our brain.
- The Duchenne smile is a genuine smile that involves not only the muscles around the mouth (like a regular smile) but also the muscles around the eyes. It's named after **Guillaume Duchenne, a 19th-century French neurologist** who studied facial expressions.

Are you ready? Let's play!



Breathing

- Inhale through your nose, **hold for 2 seconds**, and release through your mouth.
- Inhale and hold **for 3 seconds**, release through your mouth.
- then inhale and **hold for 4 seconds**. As you release your breath, **start making sounds**.

Voice

- Inhale through your nose, hold **for 2 seconds**, and release through your mouth.
- Inhale and hold **for 3 seconds**, release through your mouth.
- then inhale and hold **for 4 seconds**. As you release your breath, start making **louder sounds**.

Let's play

- Inhale, hold, and let out an ugly sound.
- Inhale, hold, and make another sound—**whatever comes to mind**.

Facial gymnastics

- Touch all parts of your face and start making funny expressions. Move **your eyes, nose, and mouth**.
- Try to **make yourself look as silly as possible**.
- Now, let's start **adding sounds** to this facial gymnastics. These movements will help you laugh!

Are you ready? Let's play!

Breathing + start Laughing and play

- Inhale through your nose, **hold for 4 seconds**, and release through your mouth. (x3)
- then inhale and **hold for 4 seconds**. As you release your breath, **start I start laughing however it comes naturally. AH AH AH AH (Try as much as possible)**
- **Very good, very good, YEAHHHHH! ! clap your hands!**
The phrase is a common expression of encouragement and approval, often used in informal settings, like praising someone's actions or a performance. **It conveys a sense of positive reinforcement and appreciation.**

Laughing away the stress!

Laughter Yoga Exercises

Argue laughing



Scare laughing



ZIP laughing



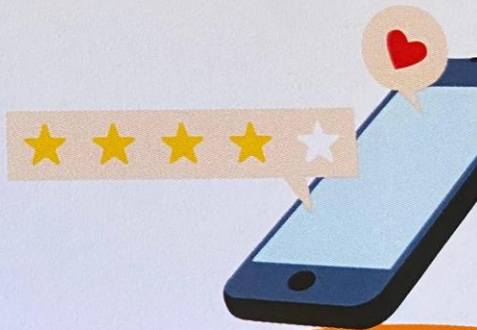
mental bloss



Course evaluation: The Well-Being Code: Energy Tools and Mind-Body Activity for Self-Care

We want your feedback

www.teacheracademy.eu/survey



*Your opinion matters and
inspires me to improve.
Take 5 minutes to fill in this
[survey.](#)*

Thank you!

**Grazie
di cuore!**

