

MANAGING STRESS

Simple tools to help your body settle, your mind slow down, and you reconnect with the present moment.

Start here

You do not have to make stress disappear. The goal is to help your nervous system move from high alert toward enough steadiness to choose your next step. Pick one tool and notice whether anything shifts—even a little.

WHEN STRESS HITS

Box Breathing - 4 x 4

Inhale gently for 4 counts • hold 4 • exhale 4 • hold 4. Repeat for 3-5 rounds. If holding your breath feels uncomfortable, shorten the holds or simply make your exhale slow and easy.

Cyclic Sighing / Physiological Sigh

Take one comfortable inhale through your nose, then a second smaller inhale to gently top it off. Follow with one long, slow exhale. Repeat without forcing your breath. Even 1-5 minutes can be useful.

Tapping (EFT)

Gently tap through the common EFT points while naming what is present. Try: “Even though I feel overwhelmed right now, I can be kind to myself in this moment.”

[The Tapping Solution](#) • [Christian Tapping](#)

Legs Up the Wall

Lie on your back with your legs resting up a wall or supported on a couch. Let your shoulders soften and breathe naturally for 5-10 minutes. Choose another position if this is uncomfortable for your body.

5-4-3-2-1 Grounding

5 things you see • 4 things you feel • 3 things you hear • 2 things you smell • 1 thing you taste. Slow down enough to actually notice each one.

YOUR 5-MINUTE RESET

Minute 1 - ORIENT: Look around. Feel your feet. Notice where you are.

Minutes 2-3 - BREATHE: Choose box breathing or cyclic sighing.

Minute 4 - RELEASE: Stretch, tap, walk, or relax your muscles.

Minute 5 - CHOOSE: Ask, “What is the next kind, wise, manageable thing I can do?”

A helpful reminder: regulation is not about doing every tool. Find two or three practices your body responds to and practice them when you are relatively calm, too.

MORE WAYS TO HELP YOUR NERVOUS SYSTEM SETTLE

Choose what fits the moment. Regulation is not one-size-fits-all.

Orient to Safety

Let your eyes slowly move around the room. Find three things that signal safety or steadiness—a window, a familiar object, sunlight, a safe person. Remind your brain: “Right now, I am here.”

Feet on the Floor

Press both feet gently into the floor. Feel the chair supporting you. Notice the weight of your body and the surface beneath you.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Gently tense one muscle group for about 5 seconds, then release for 10-15 seconds. Notice the difference between tension and letting go. Skip painful or injured areas.

Temperature Shift

Splash cool water on your face, hold a cool washcloth to your cheeks, or step outside for fresh air. Keep the temperature comfortable rather than extreme.

Rhythmic Movement

Walk, sway, stretch, rock, or slowly shake out your hands. Repetitive movement can help your body discharge some of the activation it is carrying.

Name What You Feel

Ask: What am I feeling? Where do I notice it in my body? What might this feeling be telling me I need? Naming the emotion can create a little space around it.

Reduce the Input

Silence notifications. Step away from news or social media. Dim the lights. Move somewhere quieter. Sometimes regulation begins by asking your nervous system to process less.

Connect

Reach out to someone safe. You do not have to explain everything. Try: “I’m having a hard moment. Could you stay with me for a few minutes?”

Prayer or Quiet Reflection

Bring what you are carrying into prayer. You might begin: “God, help me notice what I am carrying and what I need to release.”

WHEN STRESS IS HIGH

Start simple: reduce stimulation • slow your breathing • drink some water • eat if you have not eaten • step outside • move your body • reach out to someone safe. Small signals of safety, repeated over time, matter.

Important: These are educational stress-management tools and are not a substitute for medical or mental health care. Stop any exercise that makes you feel worse. If you are in immediate danger or having thoughts of harming yourself, seek urgent help or call/text 988 in the U.S.

REACHING FREEDOM

Practical tools for emotional awareness, regulation, healing, and connection. reachingfreedom.co/resources