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Life is challenging and stressful sometimes. Stress affects our bodies, thoughts, emotions and even our energy. Stress dampens our capacity for thoughtful reflection and response – so we're more likely to get stuck in the stress, react in a less-than-helpful way, and have fewer ideas for how to move through it – or optimism that we can.

That's why it's helpful for us to know and practice healthy stress management techniques. Like professional athletes, when we practice enough to make these a part of us, it gives us space to breathe, reflect and make positive choices. These techniques slow us down, which opens space for new ideas. We are managing life rather than life managing us.

Here are some of my favorite techniques to remain calm, even during trying times. There are techniques for the physical, mental (thoughts), emotional, and energy aspects of ourselves. At the end of this handout, you'll find guidance on easy and effective tools that you can use to release stress. It doesn't matter where you start or which one(s) you choose. To break the cycle of stress, just begin anywhere. Experiment and discover which practices you like the best. And know that your favorites may change over time, as your needs change. We are constantly growing and evolving.

You can find more in depth information and additional exercises in my publication, *Loving Insights: A Higher Perspective On Emotions – your guide to a relaxed body, calm emotions and clear mind*, which covers 44 emotions. Each emotion has personal reflections, intuitive wisdom and practical tips and tools for transformation. You can purchase just the emotions you are most interested in, or treat yourself to the full collection at [LovingInsights.com](http://LovingInsights.com)

I also welcome you to contact me at [SusanAtchison@gmail.com](mailto:SusanAtchison@gmail.com) or 847-370-5181 for a personal Be Calm session. You can connect with me in person in the Chicago area, or via virtual platforms from nearly anywhere in the world. Your Be Calm session might include tension releasing exercises, guided visualization, mantra, Reiki, or intuitive messages. Each session is customized to your needs.

## **Physical pathways to peace**

We store stress in our bodies – you know it when you feel a jammed up jaw, scrunched up shoulders or sour stomach. Even stress from long ago can linger in our bodies, hence the phrases, “The issues are in the tissues,” or “The body tells the truth.”

That’s why using body-oriented exercises to release stress and restore calm are so helpful – and why they are given here first. When you first clear tension from the body, it opens space for the mind and emotions to relax also. This has been known for thousands of years – it is the reason that yoga was created. All those postures were designed to release tension from the body so that the mind was clear to meditate.

- **Get Grounded:** Press your feet firmly into the floor. This lifts the diaphragm, inviting a deeper, fuller breath. If you are standing, face your palms down parallel to the floor and imagine that you are pressing an invisible force down into the floor.
- **Keep Breathing:** Your body has an autonomic nervous system (your heart rate, sweating, digestion, etc.) and a voluntary nervous system (your muscles). Your breath is the only one that functions in both ways – it is the link between the two. Thus, you can use breathing exercises to calm your nervous system. A few easy breathing techniques are:

- Inhale through your nose, and exhale, long and slow, through your mouth.
- Inhale through your nose, and pause before your exhale through your mouth. Some people like to use a rhythm such as inhale to the count of 4, hold for the count of 5 and exhale to the count of 6. You can adjust these counts to match your own natural rhythm.
- Add an affirmation to the breathing. For instance,
  - Breathe in while internally saying, “I breathe in peace” (4 count)
  - Hold while you silently use the words, “I feel peace inside” (5 count)
  - Exhale while you think, “I bring peace around me” (6 count)
- **Forehead Freedom:** Place your two palms over your forehead (one set of fingers will likely be partly over the other), then slowly move each out to the side (the right hand to the right side and the left hand to the left side), gently stretching the forehead. Imagine that you are sweeping out all tension and upset thoughts. The soft gliding motion, known as ‘effleurage,’ is soothing to our skin. Then shake your hands down towards the floor to shake all that off. Repeat.

## Therapeutic Thoughts

We have about 60,000 thoughts a day, and up to 80% of them are the same from day to day. Moreover, often a large percentage of these are negative – worries about the future, remorse about the past, and so forth. Each time you have similar thought, it follows a pathway of neurons in your brain. Repeated thinking solidifies that pathway. You can choose to create a new, more positive neural pathway by upgrading your thoughts.

- **“I Choose Peace”:** This simple phrase is one of my favorites, because it is so easy to remember and use. When I start to have a negative thought, I replace it with, “I choose peace.” The word ‘choose’ is powerful – it creates intent.
- **Put it in the Past:** When you find yourself thinking or reacting in a way that you would rather not – or that you thought you had gotten over – just replace that thought with, “I remember when I used to (worry, etc.)” This quickly and easily and without judgment moves that reaction into the past.

- **Script Your Own Scene:** When you enter an event, visualize the people there facing you and you looking at each one and saying, “*I love myself, therefore you love me* (in your mind, point to one), *you love me*” (point to the second) etc. Imagine them saying, “*Yes! We love you.*”<sup>1</sup>
- **Be Wonder-ful:** Someone’s response to you probably is not about you! Play the ‘**What If**’ game: Wonder to yourself, “What if her family member is sick? What if he is shy or anxious? etc. Then be wonderful in another way by mentally sending compassion and love to that person.

## Emotions

Our emotions are our guidance system – positive emotions tell us that we are on a forward moving course, and negative or conflicted emotions let us know that we would be wise to make a course correction. Here are some easy ways to get our emotions moving in the right directions.

- **Acceptance:** Spiritual teacher Matt Kahn suggests that when we feel something, we allow ourselves to feel it. He uses the phrase, “I feel this way because I do, and I’ll feel this way until I don’t.” This frees us from fighting the feelings, which often only keeps them engaged (‘what we resist, persists’).<sup>2</sup>
- **Acronym Poem:** Write the word that describes your emotional state, vertically. Then, make a short poem, using each letter of that word as the starting letter of a line. Example:

**M**aybe I need to think  
**O**ut of the box  
**O**r allow myself to  
**D**rop all my regrets from  
**Y**esterday

**N**early  
**E**veryone  
**R**uminates about what could happen but  
**V**ery often it’s not what happens, but  
**O**ur ability to  
**U**nderstand and adapt, and this  
**S**trengthens us

- **Light up with Laughter:** laughter has a biologic purpose, which is to assure those around us that they are safe. Assure yourself that you are safe with this laughter exercise; the clapping in it balances the two hemispheres of the brain:

Clap two times in front of you while saying, “Ho Ho”

Clap three times to one side of you while saying, “Ha Ha Ha”

Clap two times in front of you again, while saying, “Ho Ho”

Clap three times on the other side of you while saying, “Ha Ha Ha”

Keep repeating. You’ll find that you go faster and faster and ultimately begin to genuinely laugh, which lightens the mood while helping you to breathe deeply.<sup>3</sup>

## Energy Essentials

The essential quality of energy is that it is everywhere.

- **Chakra Cleanse:** Sit comfortably with your feet flat on the floor. Imagine that you are growing a large tree root from the base of your spine down into the earth.

Now visualize your root chakra, at the base of your spine. It should be a vibrant red. If it has any cloudy or murky or grayish areas, send that down the root deep into the earth. When that is complete, breathe up healthy, vibrant energy. The energy color may be clear, a beautiful rich brown of the earth, the bright green of newly growing plants or rich red – it doesn’t matter. When that energy reaches your root chakra, it blossoms into vibrant red and fills the whole chakra.

Repeat this process for each chakra:

- Sacral chakra, between your belly button and pubic bone; the healthy color will be vivid orange
- Solar plexus chakra, between your ribcage and your belly button ; the refreshed color will be bright yellow, like the sun – it is your solar center!
- Heart chakra; the healed color will be green, or rose, possibly tinged with gold
- Throat chakra; the cleared color will be bright blue
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Eye, or Brow, chakra, between and slightly above your eyebrows; the newly cleansed color will be indigo (a deep purple-blue)
- Crown chakra, at the top center of your head; the brightened color will be white or possibly violet

- **Salt Scrub:** At the end of the day, put some sea salt on your wash cloth or brush and scrub down your body. Sea salt cleanses negative energies off of you.
- **Be Bubblelicious:** Imagine that you have a bubble of white light around you, and that the outside of your bubble will only allow positive energy that is good for you to come inside – everything else will bounce off or be returned to the person it belongs to.

### Tools for Transformation

- **Confidence with Crystals:** Crystals are made of crystalline molecules set in patterns. Using crystals can help to bring our thoughts and energies into alignment. Tourmaline absorbs negative energies. Amethyst is soothing. Sunstone embodies the warmth, energy and happiness of the sun while it offers protection, strength, openness, mental clarity, and blessings as it ignites your passion, motivation, personal power and leadership qualities.
- **Store it in a Stone:** Go for a walk and find a stone that feels right to you. Bring it home, and name it for what you want to bring to balance. You might name it 'Anxiety,' 'Panic,' 'Sadness' or even 'Illness.' Become friends with your stone. Remember that 'what you resist persists.' so when you feel those feelings, don't fight them - just put them in the stone. The natural minerals in the stone will soothe you, and the essence of the stone will support you. 'Stones are the bones of Mother Earth' – with the stone, you have the support of Mother Earth in your hand. When you no longer feel the feelings, take your stone and put it in natural water such as a stream or pond.<sup>4</sup>
- **Arm Yourself with Aromatherapy:** The molecules of essential oils go directly from your nose to the amygdala, a cluster of neurons in your brain that acts as a clearinghouse for emotional reactions, especially fear-based ones. That's why many research studies have demonstrated that essential oils such as lavender, orange or ylang ylang can reduce those upsetting feelings and restore balance. Put a drop in your hand, rub your hands together, cup them over your nose, and inhale deeply. For more information on essential oils for emotions, go to <https://OilsOn.org>

I hope that you have enjoyed reading about these techniques to Be Calm, and that they help you to do so.

May you be calm.



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Taught to me by:

<sup>1</sup> Billie Topa Tate, founder of Mystical Sciences Institute

<sup>2</sup> Matt Kahn, author and teacher

<sup>3</sup> Laughter Yoga teacher training

<sup>4</sup> Anthony William, author of 'Medical Medium'