



CARING FOR YOURSELF AS A PROFESSIONAL

SIMPLE GROUNDING EXERCISES AND MINDFULNESS TIPS TO CARE FOR OURSELVES DURING AND AFTER WORK

5 SENSES: ONE SENSE EDITION

1

Our senses can help ground us to the present moment, and can be helpful if we're stuck ruminating on the past or worrying about the future. Pick one sense, perhaps your favorite, and list all of the things you notice with that sense. Example: I can feel my feet on the ground, my glasses on my nose, my elbows on the desk, etc.

This takes the pressure away from remembering all the senses, or the [5-4-3-2-1 method](#) used for relieving anxiety symptoms (Speaking of Health, 2020).

2

PLAY MUSIC AND/OR TONES DURING YOUR PRIVATE WORK TIME

A quick search on a video browser will yield many options for music to help calm the mind, and can even help promote focus. For example, try listening to [Calm Your Mind Quickly with Stress Relief Isochronic Tones](#) (Lewis, 2021).

3

BODY SCAN

A body scan is a simple way to gauge if/where you are holding any tension. Focus on each part of your body, from head to toe, one part at a time (i.e. head, eyes, neck, shoulders, etc.). If you feel any tension, simply note it, relax it, and move on.

This builds body awareness and mindfulness.

4

PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE TENSING/RELAXING

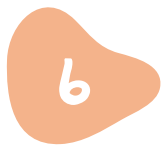
Trauma and stress can be held in the body physically. [This progressive muscle relaxation exercise](#) (Nunez, 2020), which focuses on squeezing and relaxing muscles, can be a way to move and expel energy that lingers in the body.

5

MOVEMENT: STRETCHING

Movement, or a lack of movement, really does have an effect on our bodies and minds. [Desk stretches](#) (Healthline Editorial Team, 2020) can be a simple way to incorporate some movement into your schedule, even on busy days. If you find it difficult to incorporate on your own, perhaps try visiting a co-worker's office or play with a pet while working from home.

This exercise does not have to be time-intensive to be effective and can be adapted for different ability levels.



INTENTIONAL DEBRIEF WITH A CO-WORKER

Vicarious trauma (Office for Victims of Crime, n.d.) can be easy to spread. Try to focus on how the event is affecting you, not the details of the client's trauma or situation. Make sure the person you're sharing with has the space to hold for you first. Try to keep work conversation during work time only. Set boundaries for yourself and others as needed.



AFTER WORK HOURS: FOCUSED TIME

Find something you can be present in after-work hours. Creative expression helps many folks recharge. Hobbies could include family time, such as evening walks, family reading or movie time, crafting, puzzles, etc. Anything that you can be fully present in, either by yourself or with others. This focused time can allow your 'cup' to fill back up.



AFTER WORK HOURS: DETOX

You may want to consider how you consume social media, news, or intense/triggering media after work. Set a timer on social media apps to avoid 'doom-scrolling'. Consider consuming news in more intentional ways, such as a daily or weekly news brief in your email. Find a light-hearted show or movie to look forward to after work to help you decompress.

For many people, going out for drinks with friends, exercising, or binge-watching shows can be a great way to recharge; however, any coping strategy when done in excess can begin to interfere with healthy functioning or can even become harmful.



AFTER WORK HOURS: COUNSELING

Scheduling time with a counselor or therapist to help navigate stress or trauma is always a great way to practice caring for yourself.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Anti-Racism Resources

<https://projects.iq.harvard.edu/antiracismresources/bipoc/selfcare>

Survivor's sanctuary: Healing room

<http://sanctuary.metoomvmt.org/healing-room/>

Grounding tools you can use: An interactive guide

<https://www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/courses/grounding/eng/html5.html>

Self-care in times of distress and continuous crisis

<https://www.nsvrc.org/blogs/self-care-times-distress-and-continuous-crisis>

3 Mindfulness Practices for Neurodiverse Meditators

<https://www.mindful.org/3-mindfulness-practices-for-neurodiverse-meditators/>

REFERENCES

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Stretches to do at work every day. Healthline Media. https://www.healthline.com/health/deskercise#TOC_TITLE_HDR_1

Lewis. (2021, November 14). *Mind amend: Calm your mind quickly with stress relief isochronic tones* [Video]. YouTube. <https://youtu.be/4F5ODqWOUaU>

Nunez, K. (2020, August 10). *The benefits of progressive muscle relaxation and how to do it.* Healthline Media. <https://www.healthline.com/health/progressive-muscle-relaxation>

Office for Victims of Crime. (n.d.) *What is vicarious trauma?* [Webpage]. U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs. <https://ovc.ojp.gov/program/vtt/what-is-vicarious-trauma>