

10 Somatic Grounding Practices

Body-based tools for regulation, presence, and self-connection

Somatic practices work because the body keeps the score — and the body also keeps the solution. These ten practices use physical sensation, movement, and breath to regulate from the inside out.

THE PRACTICES

1. Butterfly Hug (Bilateral Stimulation)

Cross arms over your chest, hands on opposite shoulders. Alternately tap your shoulders — left, right, left, right — slowly and rhythmically. This bilateral stimulation calms the nervous system after activation.

2. Shaking and Trembling

Stand and gently shake your whole body for 2–3 minutes — loose wrists, shoulders, hips, knees. Animals do this naturally after a threat response to discharge activation. Let it happen.

3. Lion's Breath

Inhale through the nose. Exhale fully through the mouth — tongue extended, eyes wide, 'HAAA' sound. Repeat 3–5 times. Releases tension held in the face, jaw, and throat.

4. Wall Push

Stand arm's distance from a wall. Push both hands flat against it firmly for 10 seconds. Release. Repeat 3–5 times. Orients your body outward and discharges fight energy.

5. Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Feet to head: tense each muscle group firmly for 5–7 seconds, then release completely. Notice the contrast between tension and release.

6. Rocking

Sit or stand and rock gently forward and back, or side to side. Activates the vestibular system — one of our earliest self-soothing mechanisms. We never outgrow it.

7. Soft Belly Breathing

Hand on belly. Breathe so your belly rises on the inhale and falls on the exhale. Let it be soft, round, unheld. The opposite of the defensive breath-holding we do under stress.

8. Cold Hands on Face

Run cold water over your wrists and press cool palms gently to your face for 30 seconds. Activates the dive reflex and immediately calms a racing heart.

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9. Slow Stretching with Breath

Move into a gentle stretch that opens the chest, hips, or shoulders. Breathe into the tension. Hold for 4–6 slow breaths. Combine sensation with breath for vagal activation.

10. Orienting

Slowly turn your head from side to side, letting your eyes follow. Notice your environment with genuine curiosity. Orienting signals to your nervous system that there is no immediate threat.

HOW TO USE THESE

- Use 1–3 practices before any session, journaling, or inner work
- Use them when you feel activated, dissociated, or overwhelmed
- Build a daily 5-minute practice combining 2–3 as a baseline routine

The body is not a vehicle for the mind. It is where wisdom lives. These practices are a way of coming home to it.