***Ujjayi Breathing or Ocean Breathing***

This type of breathing can feel strengthening and empowering, especially for men.

You can nickname this “Darth Vader breathing” or hot soup breathing.

* Inhaling and exhaling will both be through the nose.
* Breathe in through your nose. Your belly should expand.
* Exhale through your nose. Although some air may flow out of your mouth, thing about doing the work with your nose. Push out breath through the chest/neck as your belly contracts. Your body should make a deeper noise (like an ocean wave coming ashore against the beach or stones).
* Attempt to keep the inhales an exhales even, especially while you’re first learning this technique; eventually, work toward a longer exhale.
* Do not attempt more than five full sets if you are new to this (to avoid possible lightheadedness).

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***Progressive Muscle Relaxation – Clench and Release***

* Make fists.
* Focus on your clenched fists. Really notice the contraction of your muscles. Feel your fingernails dig into your palms.
* Continue clenching until you can’t tighten your fists anymore.
* Whenever it feels too uncomfortable to keep holding on, know that you can slowly, mindfully *let go* at any time.
* When you choose to begin releasing your grip, notice your fingers uncurling, and feel the trickle of letting go (perhaps even in your arms and shoulders).
* Notice how good it feels to *let go*!

**NOTE:** Any muscles group can be clenched and released (stomach and feet are popular choices). For help with sleep and deeper relaxation, clench and release one muscle group at a time, holding each clench for 20-30 seconds and then slowly releasing. This can be done from top to bottom of the body (or vice versa) and should take about 20 minutes to complete.

You can also clench and release bilaterally, meaning one side of your body at a time. For instance, clenching just your right hand for 20-30 seconds, then slowly releasing. Then clenching just your left hand for 20-30 seconds, then slowly releasing.

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**“Tapping In” to Reduce Anxiety**

1. Find a comfortable place to sit or lie, where you will not be disturbed. Close your eyes. Take several long, slow breaths, fill the belly, and exhale slowly. Let yourself relax.
2. Bring up the imagined resource or positive memory. Bring it up with as much sensory detail as possible: sights, sounds, smells, sensations, and the emotional feeling that goes along with it.
3. When you have a sense of the resource, begin to tap on your knees or shoulders right-left, right-left. The taps can be quick or slow, just find a speed that feels best to you. Do this 6 to 12 times (tapping both right and left equals one time).  If you’re tapping your knees, tap with the left fingers on the left knee and with the right fingers on the right knee. If you’re tapping your shoulders, cross your arms over each other in front of your body as though you’re hugging yourself. Then tap with the left fingers on the right shoulder and the right fingers on the left shoulder.
4. Pause and check in with yourself and see how you’re feeling. You may keep tapping as long as it feels good and positive, but usually not more than 15 taps on each side.

When using resource tapping you are imagining or remembering good qualities and experiences, real or imagined, and then adding bilateral stimulation through left-right tapping to strengthen your associations with these qualities or memories. You can do this for yourself, or you can do it for someone else by guiding them through the exercises and then doing the tapping for them. When using this technique it’s important to remember or imagine good things with enough sensory detail to get a felt sense in your body and/or your emotions.  Details can include how it feels in your body, what you see, hear, smell, taste, etc.

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**Light Stream Imagery**

Lower your gaze or close your eyes, if you feel comfortable doing so. Position your body in a way that is comfortable, perhaps with your feet flat on the ground and your hands palm up or palm down on your lap.

Notice a place in your body where you have discomfort or know as a place where you hold stress.

Imagine that a bright and healing light has begun to form overhead. This light can be whatever color you want it to be—whatever you associate with healing, happiness, goodness, or any of the other attitudes of mindfulness. If you don’t like the idea of a light, you can think of it simply as a color or an essence.

Now, think about this light beginning to move through your body or over your body (whichever you choose), from the top of your head, moving inch by inch, slowly, until it reaches the bottom of your feet.

Spend a few moments just hanging out with the presence of this light or essence in or around your body.

Notice if it has any other qualities besides color, like a texture, or a sound, or a smell.

Draw your attention back to where you noticed discomfort or stress earlier. What has happened to it?

If the distress is still there on some level in your body, think about deepening your breathing so that it makes the light or essence more brilliant and intense…so brilliant and intense that the discomfort can’t even dream of existing within it.

This exercise might take some repetition or practice before you notice subtle, or not so subtle, shifts in yourself.

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**Body Scan**

Begin by bringing your attention into your body.

You can close your eyes if that’s comfortable for you.

You can notice your body seated wherever you’re seated, feeling the weight of your body on the chair, on the floor.

Take a few deep breaths.

And as you take a deep breath, bring in more oxygen enlivening the body. And as you exhale, have a sense of relaxing more deeply.

You can notice your feet on the floor, notice the sensations of your feet touching the floor. The weight and pressure, vibration, heat.

You can notice your legs against the chair, pressure, pulsing, heaviness, lightness.

Notice your back against the chair.

Bring your attention into your stomach area. If your stomach is tense or tight, let it soften. Take a breath.

Notice your hands. Are your hands tense or tight. See if you can allow them to soften.

Notice your arms. Feel any sensation in your arms. Let your shoulders be soft.

Notice your neck and throat. Let them be soft. Relax.

Soften your jaw. Let your face and facial muscles be soft.

Then notice your whole body present. Take one more breath.

Be aware of your whole body as best you can. Take a breath. And then when you’re ready, you can open your eyes

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**“Leaves on a Stream” Exercise**

* Sit in a comfortable position and either close your eyes or rest them gently on a fixed spot in the room.
* Visualize yourself sitting beside a gently flowing stream with leaves floating along the surface of the water. *Pause 10 seconds.*
* For the next few minutes, take each thought that enters your mind and place it on a leaf… let it float by.  Do this with each thought – pleasurable, painful, or neutral.  Even if you have joyous or enthusiastic thoughts, place them on a leaf and let them float by.
* If your thoughts momentarily stop, continue to watch the stream.  Sooner or later, your thoughts will start up again.  *Pause 20 seconds.*
* Allow the stream to flow at its own pace.  Don’t try to speed it up and rush your thoughts along.  You’re not trying to rush the leaves along or “get rid” of your thoughts.  You are allowing them to come and go at their own pace.
* If your mind says “This is dumb,” “I’m bored,” or “I’m not doing this right” place *those thoughts* on leaves, too, and let them pass.  *Pause 20 seconds.*
* If a leaf gets stuck, allow it to hang around until it’s ready to float by.  If the thought comes up again, watch it float by another time.  *Pause 20 seconds.*
* If a difficult or painful feeling arises, simply acknowledge it.  Say to yourself, “I notice myself having a feeling of boredom/impatience/frustration.”  Place those thoughts on leaves and allow them float along.
* From time to time, your thoughts may hook you and distract you from being fully present in this exercise. This is *normal.*  As soon as you realize that you have become sidetracked, gently bring your attention back to the visualization exercise.

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**Box/Square Breathing:**

Breathe in to a count of four.

Hold to a count of four.

Breathe out to a count of four.

Again hold to a count of four.

One of the goals of boxed square breathing is to bring the respiratory system back into alignment and end the shallow breathing that results from the fight or flight response mode the body enters when feeling stressed. Researchers with the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine report that in addition to reducing stress, controlled breathing is used to treat insomnia, anxiety, depression and pain control.

* Sit straight up in a comfortable chair. Put your feet flat on the floor and relax your hands in your lap. You may overlap your hands or let them lie separately with palms facing up. The important factor is to maintain an aligned posture and to be at ease.
* Close your eyes or let your vision blur.
* Close your mouth and breathe in slowly through your nose. Count to four as you inhale. Hold your breath for four seconds. You are not trying to deprive your body of oxygen, but need to allow a few seconds for the air to fill your lungs. Concentrate on your belly and notice how it also moves when you inhale deeply.
* Open your mouth slightly and slowly exhale to a count of four. Hold the exhale to another count of four. Ideally, you should repeat the exercise for four minutes, but two or three times will help you to achieve a more relaxed state, relieve tension and settle your nerves.
* Allow the air to fill your belly and notice how it passes over your chest.

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