



TIP Skills: Changing Your Body Chemistry

To reduce extreme emotion mind *fast*.

Remember these as **TIP** skills:

T

TIP THE TEMPERATURE of your face with **COLD WATER*** (to calm down fast)

- Holding your breath, put your face in a bowl of cold water, or hold a cold pack (or zip-lock bag of cold water) on your eyes and cheeks.
- Hold for 30 seconds. Keep water above 50°F.

I

INTENSE EXERCISE* (to calm down your body when it is revved up by emotion)

- Engage in intense exercise, if only for a short while.
- Expend your body's stored up physical energy by running, walking fast, jumping, playing basketball, lifting weights, etc.

P

PACED BREATHING (pace your breathing by slowing it down)

- Breathe deeply into your belly.
- Slow your pace of inhaling and exhaling way down (on average, five to six breaths per minute).
- Breathe *out* more slowly than you breathe *in* (for example, 5 seconds in and 7 seconds out).

PAIRED MUSCLE RELAXATION (to calm down by pairing muscle relaxation with breathing out)

- While breathing into your belly deeply tense your body muscles (*not* so much as to cause a cramp).
- Notice the tension in your body.
- While breathing out, say the word "Relax" in your mind.
- Let go of the tension.
- Notice the difference in your body.

***Caution:** Very cold water decreases your heart rate rapidly. Intense exercise will increase heart rate. Consult your health care provider before using these skills if you have a heart or medical condition, a lowered base heart rate due to medications, take a beta-blocker, are allergic to cold, or have an eating disorder.

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Ideas for Practicing Nonjudgmentalness

Leaving out comparisons, judgments, and assumptions:

1. ☐ Practice observing judgmental thoughts and statements, saying in your mind, “A judgmental thought arose in my mind.”
2. ☐ **Count judgmental thoughts and statements** (by moving objects or pieces of paper from one pocket to another, by clicking a sports counter, or by marking a piece of paper).
3. ☐ Replace judgmental thoughts and statements with nonjudgmental thoughts and statements.

Tips for replacing judgment by stating the facts:

1. **Describe the facts** of the event or situation—*only* what is observed with your senses.
2. **Describe the consequences** of the event. Keep to the facts.
3. **Describe your own feelings** in response to the facts (remember, emotions are not judgments).
4. ☐ **Observe your judgmental facial expressions, postures, and voice tones** (including voice tones in your head).
5. ☐ **Change judgmental expressions, postures, and voice tones.**
6. ☐ Tell someone what you did today nonjudgmentally, or about an event that occurred. Stay very concrete; only relate what you observed directly.
7. ☐ **Write out a nonjudgmental description** of an event that prompted an emotion.
8. ☐ Write out a nonjudgmental blow-by-blow account of a particularly important episode in your day. Describe both what happened in your environment and what your thoughts, feelings, and actions were. Leave out any analysis of why something happened, or why you thought, felt, or acted as you did. Stick to the facts that you observed.
9. ☐ Imagine a person you are angry with. Bring to mind what the person has done that has caused so much anger. Try to become that person, seeing life from that person's point of view. Imagine that person's feelings, thoughts, fears, hopes, and wishes. Imagine that person's history and what has happened in his or her history. Imagine understanding that person.
10. ☐ When judgmental, **practice half-smiling and/or willing hands.** (See Distress Tolerance Handout 14: Half-Smiling and Willing Hands.)
11. Other: _____

Ideas for Practicing One-Mindfulness

1. ☐ **Awareness while making tea or coffee.** Prepare a pot of tea or coffee to serve a guest or to drink by yourself. Do each movement slowly, in awareness. Do not let one detail of your movements go by without being aware of it. Know that your hand lifts the pot by its handle. Know that you are pouring the fragrant, warm tea or coffee into the cup. Follow each step in awareness. Breathe gently and more deeply than usual. Take hold of your breath if your mind strays.
2. ☐ **Awareness while washing the dishes.** Wash the dishes consciously, as though each bowl is an object of contemplation. Consider each bowl sacred. Follow your breath to prevent your mind from straying. Do not try to hurry to get the job over with. Consider washing the dishes the most important thing in life.
3. ☐ **Awareness while hand-washing clothes.** Do not wash too many clothes at one time. Select only three or four articles of clothing. Find the most comfortable position to sit or stand, so as to prevent a backache. Scrub the clothes consciously. Hold your attention on every movement of your hands and arms. Pay attention to the soap and water. When you have finished scrubbing and rinsing, your mind and body will feel as clean and fresh as your clothes. Remember to maintain a half-smile and take hold of your breath whenever your mind wanders.
4. ☐ **Awareness while cleaning house.** Divide your work into stages: straightening things and putting away books, scrubbing the toilet, scrubbing the bathroom, sweeping the floors, and dusting. Allow a good length of time for each task. Move slowly, three times more slowly than usual. Focus your attention fully on each task. For example, while placing a book on the shelf, look at the book; be aware of what book it is; know that you are in the process of placing it on the shelf; and know that you intend to put it in that specific place. Know that your hand reaches for the book and picks it up. Avoid any abrupt or harsh movement. Maintain awareness of the breath, especially when your thoughts wander.
5. ☐ **Awareness while taking a slow-motion bath.** Allow yourself 30–45 minutes to take a bath. Don't hurry for even a second. From the moment you prepare the bath water to the moment you put on clean clothes, let every motion be light and slow. Be attentive of every movement. Place your attention on every part of your body, without discrimination or fear. Be aware of each stream of water on your body. By the time you've finished, your mind will feel as peaceful and light as your body. Follow your breath. Think of yourself as being in a clean and fragrant lotus pond in the summer.
6. ☐ **Awareness with meditation.** Sit comfortably on the floor with your back straight, on the floor or in a chair with both feet touching the floor. Close your eyes all the way, or open them slightly and gaze at something near. With each breath, say to yourself, quietly and gently, the word "One." As you inhale, say the word "One." As you exhale, say the word "One," calmly and slowly. Try to collect your whole mind and put it into this one word. When your mind strays, return gently to saying "One." If you start wanting to move, try not to move. Just gently observe wanting to move. Continue practicing a little past wanting to stop. Just gently observe wanting to stop.

7. Other: _____

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Ideas for Practicing Effectiveness

1. ☐ Observe when you begin to get angry or hostile with someone. Ask yourself, “Is this effective?”
2. ☐ Observe yourself when you start wanting to be “right” instead of effective. Give up being “right” and switch to trying to be effective.
3. ☐ Notice willfulness in yourself. Ask yourself, “Is this effective?”
4. ☐ Drop willfulness, and practice acting effectively instead. Notice the difference.
5. ☐ When feeling angry or hostile or like you're about to do something ineffective, practice willing hands.
6. Other: _____

Using Cold Water, Step by Step

COLD WATER CAN WORK WONDERS*

When you put your full face into cold water . . . **or** you put a zip-lock bag with cold water on your eyes and upper cheeks, and **hold your breath**, it tells your brain you are diving underwater.

This causes the “**dive response**” to occur. (It may take 15–30 seconds to start.)

Your heart slows down, blood flow to nonessential organs is reduced, and blood flow is redirected to the brain and heart.

This response can actually help **regulate your emotions**.

This will be useful as a **distress tolerance strategy** when you are having a very **strong, distressing emotion**, or when you are having very **strong urges to engage in dangerous behaviors**.

(This strategy works best when you are sitting quietly—activity and distraction may make it less effective.)

TRY IT OUT!

***Caution:** Very cold water decreases your heart rate. If you have any heart or medical condition, have a lowered base heart rate due to medications, or are on a beta-blocker, consult your health care provider before using these skills. Avoid ice water if you are allergic to the cold.

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Paired Muscle Relaxation, Step by Step

If you have decided to practice **paired muscle relaxation**, it can be very helpful to practice relaxing each of your muscles first.

When you are starting, practice in a quiet place to reduce distractions, and make sure that you have enough time. As you improve with practice, you will want to practice in many different kinds of places, so that you can relax effectively when you most need to.

Remember that effectiveness improves with practice. If judgments arise, observe them, let them go, and return to your practice. If you become anxious, try focusing on breathing *in* to the count of 5 and *out* to the count of 7 (or the counts you have already determined for paced breathing), breathing all the while into your belly until you can return to relaxation exercises.

Now that you are ready to begin . . .

1. Get your body into a comfortable position in which you can relax. Loosen tight clothing. Lie or sit down, with all body parts uncrossed and no body part supporting any others.
2. For each area of the body listed below, gather tension by tightening muscles. Focus on the sensation of tightness in and around that area. Hold the tension as you inhale for 5–6 seconds, then release and breathe out.
3. As you release, say in your mind very slowly the word “Relax.”
4. Observe the changes in sensations as you relax for 10–15 seconds then move on to the next muscle.

Start first with each of the 16 muscle groups.

Once you can do that, practice with medium groups of muscles and then large groups.

Once you are good at that, practice tensing your entire body at once.

When you tense your entire body, you are like a robot—stiff, nothing moving.

When you relax your entire body, you are like a rag doll—all muscles drooping down.

Once you can relax all your muscles, practice three or four times a day until you can routinely relax your entire body rapidly.

By practicing pairing exhaling and the word “Relax” with relaxing your muscles, you will eventually be able to relax just by letting go and saying the word “Relax.”

Large
Medium
Small

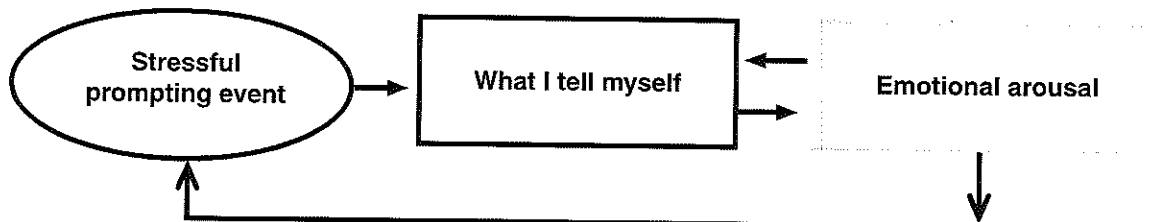
- | | |
|---|--|
| { | 1. Hands and wrists: Make fists with both hands and pull fists up on the wrists. |
| | 2. Lower and upper arms: Make fists and bend both arms up to touch your shoulders. |
| | 3. Shoulders: Pull both shoulders up to your ears. |
| { | 4. Forehead: Pull eyebrows close together, wrinkling forehead. |
| | 5. Eyes: Shut eyes tightly. |
| | 6. Nose and upper cheeks: Scrunch up nose; bring upper lips and cheeks up toward eyes. |
| { | 7. Lips and lower face: Press lips together; bring edges of lips back toward ears. |
| | 8. Tongue and mouth: Teeth together; tongue pushing on upper mouth. |
| { | 9. Neck: Push head back into chair, floor, or bed, or push chin down to chest. |
| | 10. Chest: Take deep breath and hold it. |
| { | 11. Back: Arch back, bringing shoulder blades together. |
| | 12. Stomach: Hold stomach in tightly. |
| { | 13. Buttocks: Squeeze buttocks together. |
| | 14. Upper legs and thighs: Legs out; tense thighs. |
| { | 15. Calves: Legs out; point toes down. |
| | 16. Ankles: Legs out; point toes together, heels out, toes curled under. |

Remember, paired relaxation is a skill. It takes time to develop. With practice, you will notice the benefits.

Note. Adapted from Smith, R. E. (1980). Development of an integrated coping response through cognitive–affective stress management training. In I. G. Sarason & C. D. Spielberger (Eds.), *Stress and anxiety* (Vol. 7, pp. 265–280). Washington, DC: Hemisphere. Copyright 1980 by Hemisphere Publishing Corporation. Adapted by permission.

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Effective Rethinking and Paired Relaxation, Step by Step



Step 1. Write down the **prompting event** that is often related to distressing emotions and that you want to work on reducing your emotional reactions to.

Step 2. Ask: "What must I be telling myself (that is, what are my **interpretations and thoughts**) about the event that causes such distress and arousal?" Write these down. Examples:

"He hates me," "I can't stand this!" "I can't do this," "I'll never make it," "I'm out of control!"

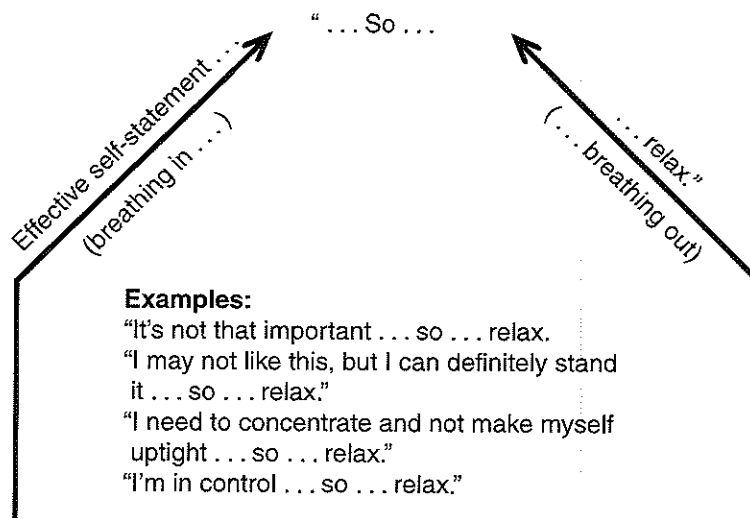
Step 3. Rethink the situation and its meaning in a way that counteracts the thoughts and interpretations producing stress and distressing emotions. As you rethink the situation, write down as many **effective thoughts** as you can to replace the stressful thoughts.

Step 4. When you are *not* in the stressful prompting event, **practice imagining** the stressful event:

- At the same time, while **breathing in**, say to yourself an effective self-statement.
- When **breathing out**, say "Relax" while intentionally relaxing all your muscles.

Step 5. Keep practicing every chance you get until you have mastered the strategy.

Step 6. When a stressful situation occurs, practice effective rethinking and paired relaxation.



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