

## Activities to help you feel calm, grounded and safe

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When we become distressed, there are activities we can do to become calm and centred in the moment, while at the same time, re-training our stress response so that it gradually decreases.

When you are feeling disturbed, restless, anxious, uptight etc:

1. Breathe slowly and steadily from your core. Imagine your fear and worry leaving you with each out-breath. With each in-breath, imagine you are breathing in calm and safety.
2. Change physical position. Move if you are stationary. Get up and walk about. If this isn't practical at the time, move a body part – wriggle fingers or toes.
3. Go outside and look at the sky. Breathe the air in and notice what it feels like.
4. Exercise: stretch up your arms to touch the ceiling. Bend down and touch your toes.
5. PMR- Progressive Muscle Relaxation: starting at the head, work through the body to the tips of your toes, progressively tightening and relaxing the muscles. Then move back up the body with your attention, actively relaxing each part, without tensing first. This activity gives the body a good work out and leaves you feeling relaxed. It is helpful to do when you can't sleep.
6. If feeling angry or frustrated, have a basket-ball you can bounce and throw. Punch a pillow.
7. Have a drink of water or make a cup of tea. Herbal tea, such as camomile is calming.
8. Listen to music that calms and relaxes or inspires you.
9. Practice meditation. Sit relaxed, back straight, eyes closed. Focus only on the feel of the breath coming in and going out. When thoughts distract you, return attention immediately to the breath. Stop if you become disturbed or unable to stop the mind chatter. It takes time and practice.
10. Take a shower or a bath. Notice the feel of the water. Pay attention to your physical sensations.
11. Notice what smells you like. Light candles, incense sticks or an aroma burner with the smells that make you feel calm and present.
12. Hold your gratitude rock and remember what it represents.

Activities you can do ahead of time to help keep you from become distressed:

1. Practice meditation daily. Sit relaxed with back straight and eyes closed. Focus on your breath. Let all thoughts go and pay no attention to them. Return your attention to the feel of the breath. A professionally qualified Mindfulness therapist can teach you the correct techniques.
2. Have a regular dose of comedy – helps us to lighten up.
3. Re-frame your situation by looking at the bigger picture - a bird's eye-view of your life.
4. List 5-6 positive thing in your life. Put the list where you can see it. Look at it regularly with attention. Look at it when you need to calm or centre yourself.
5. Write out some affirmations that have positive thoughts about yourself, such as 'I am a good father and/ or a loving partner' or 'I am studying or working to the best of my ability,' or whatever is meaningful to you right now. Read them often and take them to heart.
6. Write out a list of all the things for which you are grateful. Put it where you will see it often and read it regularly.
7. Find a small rock or stone that you like to feel. Hold it in your hand, close your eyes and mentally imprint the rock as your 'gratitude rock.' Whenever you hold it and feel it, let it remind you instantly of all the things in your life for which you feel gratitude. Hold once a day and as needed.