



HANDY GUIDE TO SELF-CARE FOR PEOPLE EXPERIENCING TRAUMA STORED IN THE BODY

Breathe. Slow intentional breathing techniques can help us release trauma related tension and bring us back to the present moment.

Try these two exercises

For general tension and pain: Inhale slowly through the nose and think of filling your torso in 3 chambers: first the pelvic floor, then the diaphragm and lower rib cage, then the chest and upper ribs. As you breath in, elongate your spine towards the sky, let your chest lift and open. Exhale slowly out of your mouth with control until all the air leaves your body. As you exhale, keep your spine extended and allow the rest of your body to soften as your shoulders drop away from your ears. Repeat as needed.

For specific areas of tension: Begin by getting into a position that is as comfortable as possible for you. If lying down creates back tension, try bolsterring your knees and head so that you may relax more fully. Bring your attention to your body, noticing any areas of pain or tension. At first, just notice without trying to change it. Then, use your breath to both increase your awareness, and soften the tension of that area. As you inhale, bring your breathe to the area where you feel pain, and use your inhalation to expand and open the tissue. When you exhale, use your exhalation to soften the tissue.



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Movement. Do any physical activity you enjoy. Movement and spiritual practices that combine slow intentional movement with slow intentional breath, such as yoga or tai chi, can be especially helpful for trauma survivors to regain a sense of presence, calm, and control in their bodies.

Touch. Touch can be an incredibly powerful tool in healing trauma. This can be your touch, a trusted loved one, or professional bodyworker. Consider asking a loved one to help by holding or pressing gently into your areas of pain or tension while you practice the breathing exercise above. See "Handy Guide to Finding a Trauma Informed Bodyworker."

Healthcare. Make an appointment with the right provider to help you. If you're struggling with GI issues, find a healthcare provider who can help you eliminate other potential causes, such as food allergies. If you're struggling with PTSD symptoms, find a qualified and trauma informed therapist.

Support System. Use your human resources. Call a supportive friend, loved one, or a crisis line.