



Somatic quieting is a natural process we can observe in our bodies through the nervous system. It is a process of emotion regulation that can work without our awareness.

Every human being has the capacity to regulate their emotions. We see young children using emotion regulation when they cry and then calm themselves. As adults, we continue to regulate feelings. Meeting new people may feel uncomfortable if we feel nervous. Emotion regulation occurs as we meet more people, becoming accustomed to the experience and gaining social skills. The nervousness becomes regulated.

Somatic quieting is exactly how it sounds. When we feel an uncomfortable emotion, such as nervousness, we are actually experiencing sensations in our bodies. These sensations may be different for each person. A common sensation for nervousness is "butterflies in the stomach." Some body sensations are more apparent, such as tension or sweating. When these sensations change — such as in reduction of intensity or movement of sensations — is when somatic quieting occurs.

But when we are unable to acclimate to a situation, this natural ability to regulate emotions is blocked. Some people are unable to overcome feelings of nervousness when meeting new people.

There are different approaches to removing this block to somatic quieting. The methods and interventions listed in this booklet have been designed specifically to help a child feel more calm and comfortable and regulate their emotions.

MINDFULNESS

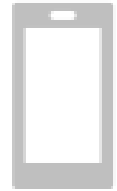
Being mindful requires us to 'pay attention on purpose'. This means not thinking about the past or worrying about the future, but instead trying to focus on being 'in the moment' and grounded in our senses.

Mindfulness involves stepping out of the 'thinking self', the self that has ideas and opinions and is impatient for the next thing, and instead moving to the 'observing self'. This is the part of you that is separate from your thoughts, it is the part of you that is able to observe your mind in action, to notice what it is doing. Whenever you observe your breath or your thoughts and feelings, the observing self is the part of you that's doing all the observing, it is the part of you that sees the big picture.

The magic of mindfulness is that it can be practised anywhere at any time. The aim is to get pupils to stay present during the activity and tune into their senses what they can taste, smell, hear, see and touch.



MOBILE APPS



- **Breathr**: Mindfulness app for youth. Free for Apple and Android mobile devices.
- **Stop, Breathe, and Think**: Web and mobile app for youth, with meditations for mindfulness and compassion.
- **Calm.com**: Free website and mobile app with guided meditation and relaxation exercises.
- **Insight Timer**: Free mobile app with virtual "bells" to time and support your meditations, and access to lots of guided meditations by many different meditation teachers.
- **MindShift**: Free mobile app for teens developed by AnxietyBC, with mindfulness and other coping skills for anxiety.
- **Smiling Mind**: Free mobile mindfulness app for young people.
- **Headspace**: "Meditation made simple." This app has a free introductory period, after which it requires a paid subscription to continue to use.

BREATHING EXERCISES

Breathing exercises are one of the most effective ways to help us to calm down. The most basic way to do mindful breathing is simply to focus attention on the breath: the inhale and the exhale. This can be done while standing, but ideally sitting or even lying down in a comfortable position with your eyes open or closed.

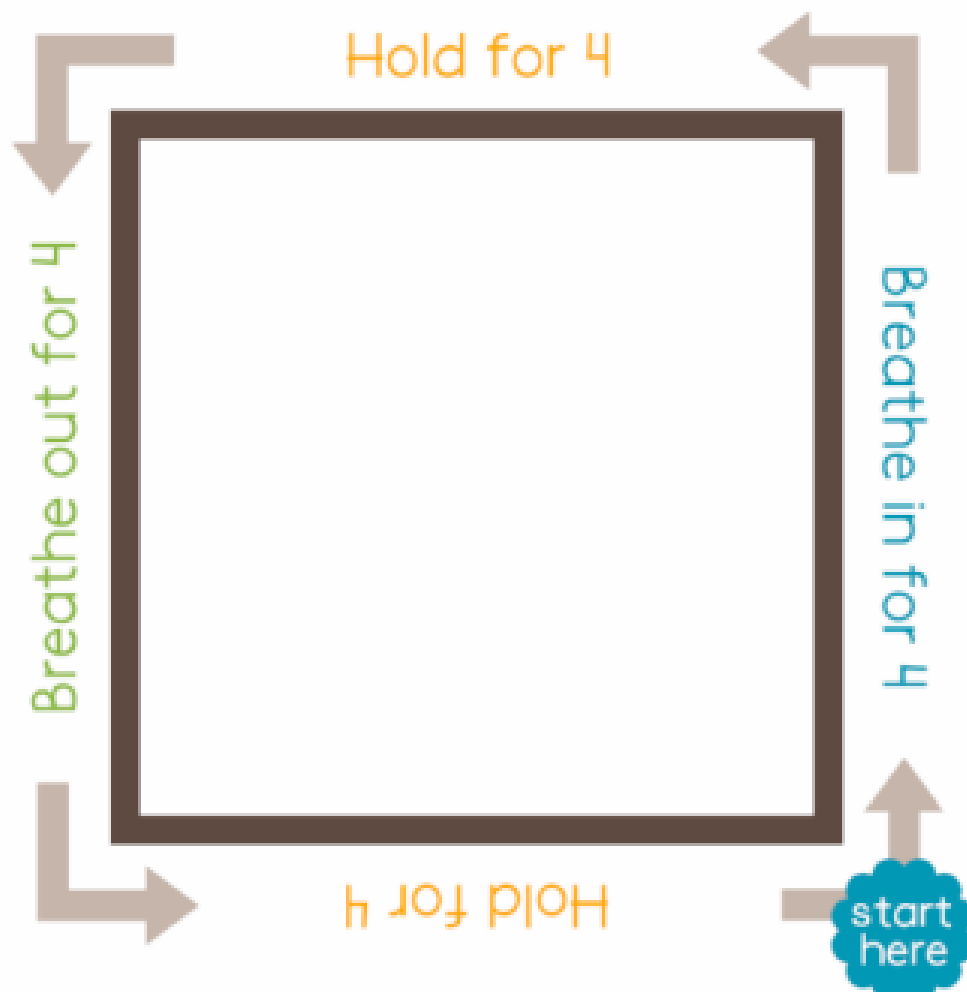
Teaching young people to use breathing exercises can help them to learn to use the breath effectively. The breathing we want young people to do is deep belly breaths, not shallow chest breaths. When they breathe in, their belly should expand, and when they breathe out, their belly should contract. Deep breathing helps to get more oxygen into your bloodstream and opens up the capillaries. It has a physical effect on our bodies to help us to calm down and reduce stress.

Support young people to practise breathing exercises daily for at least 10 breaths to feel the full effects. It can help to set aside a designated time for this. Regular practice of mindful breathing can make it easier to do when difficult situations arise.



BREATHING WITH SHAPES (PRIMARY)

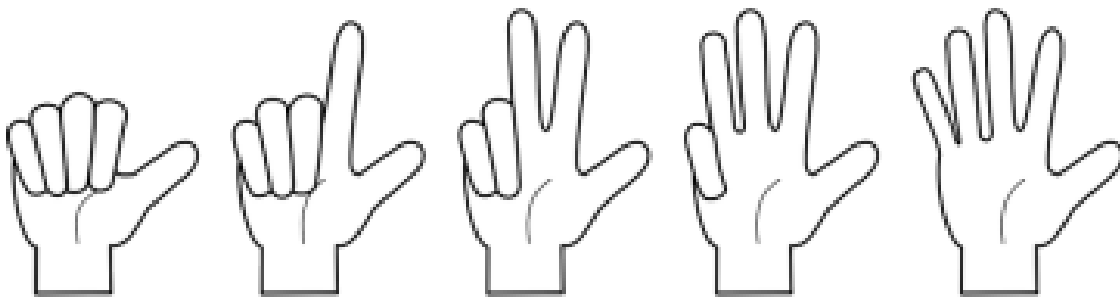
SQUARE BREATHING



- Start at the bottom right of the square
- Breathe in for four counts as you trace the first side of the square
- Hold your breath for four counts as you trace the second side of the square
- Breathe out for four counts as you trace the third side of the square
- Hold your breath for four counts as you trace the final side of the square
- You just completed one deep breath!

BREATHING WITH NUMBERS

Counting can be a useful way to help pupils to regulate their breathing. Depending on the age and stage of pupils, some may need to be supported by adults or audio or video resources in order to learn this technique and build up to doing this independently.



4-7-8 BREATHING

- Sit up straight and comfortably.
- Breathe from the belly / diaphragm (imagine a balloon under your rib cage, your stomach should push out as you take a deep breath in through nose for 4 seconds), hold for 7 seconds and breathe out for 8 seconds through the mouth very slowly.
- Imagine a balloon that has a small hole in it.
- You may want to close your eyes.

BALLOON BREATHING



Sitting in a comfortable position, place your hands around your mouth as if you were about to blow up a balloon. Take a deep breath in through the nose and, as you slowly exhale through your mouth, start to spread your hands out as if you are blowing up a great big balloon. Hold your hand position as you inhale again and then spread your hands further as you exhale. Once your balloon is as big as it can be, gently sway from side to side as you release your balloon up into the sky.

SHOULDER ROLL BREATHING



Choose a comfortable sitting position. As you take a slow deep breath in through your nose raise your shoulders up towards your ears. Breathe slowly out through your mouth, lowering your shoulders as you exhale. Repeat slowly, rolling your shoulders up and down in time with your breath.

BACK TO BACK BREATHING



Find a partner and sit on the floor back to back. Sit tall and close your eyes if you want to. Decide who will start - that person begins by inhaling deeply and then exhaling slowly, and then continues to breathe slowly and deeply. Their partner should feel the expansion in their partner's back each time they breathe in and then try to sync their own breathing so that both partners are breathing in time together.

TWIMMY BREATHING



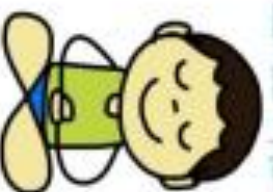
Lie on the floor and place a small stuffed animal on your stomach. Breathe in deeply through your nose and feel the stuffed animal rise, and then feel it lower as you slowly exhale through your mouth. Back the stuffed animal to sleep using the rise and fall of your stomach.

TAKE 5 BREATHING



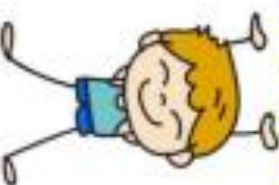
Sit comfortably, resting one hand in front of you with fingers outstretched like a star and the pointer finger of your other hand ready to trace your hand. Starting at the base of your thumb on the outside of your hand, breathe in slowly through your nose as you slide your pointer finger up to the top of your thumb. Breathe out slowly and slide your pointer finger down the inside of your thumb. Breathe in as you slide your finger up the next finger and out as you slide down. Continue breathing in and out as you trace your whole hand.

BUMBLEBEE BREATHING



Sitting comfortably, gently place the tips of your pointer fingers in your ears and close your eyes. Breathe in through your nose and then hum quietly as you slowly breathe out.

ELEPHANT BREATHING



Stand with your feet wide apart and your arms dangling in front of your body like an elephant's trunk. As you breathe in deeply through your nose, raise your arms up high above your head. Then slowly swing your arms down again as you breathe out through your mouth.

BUBBLE BREATHING



Sit comfortably with your eyes closed. Begin by imagining you are holding a bubble wand. Breathe in deeply and then, as you breathe out slowly and gently, imagine you are blowing bubbles into the room. Imagine the bubbles are filled with peace or love or happiness and that you are filling the whole room with a peaceful, happy feeling. As you keep breathing slowly and blowing your imaginary bubbles, feel your body become calm and relaxed.

GROUNDING

Grounding exercises can help young people to firmly anchor themselves in the 'present moment' - the here and now. The first aim of grounding is to help pupils to get rooted in their physical body by drawing on their senses. Grounding techniques are designed to redistribute the energy from the head into the body and to keep the mind and body connected and working together and in doing so they have an almost immediate calming effect.



EARLY YEARS/PRIMARY EXERCISES

TEXTURE BAG

Place several small, interestingly shaped, or textured objects in a bag. Have each child reach in and touch an object, one at a time, and describe what they are touching. Make sure they don't take the object out of the bag, forcing them to use only their sense of touch to explore the object.



BLINDFOLDED TASTE TESTS

Use a blindfold for each child and have them experience eating a small food, like a raisin or a cranberry, as if it was their first time eating it.

LISTEN TO THE BELL

Encourage children to listen to the bell - 30-60 seconds. What could they hear in this time? Extend to **breathe with the bell** - count how many times they can breathe while the bell sounds.



WOW FACTOR

Go for a mindful walk and then come back in – draw or write something that made them feel WOW - write WOW on a large sheet and they write or draw around it

MINDFUL WALKS

These can take various forms;

- Walk in silence for 30-60 seconds
- Hunting game - walk as though they were hunting for something hidden on the ground
- Partner walk - walk in silence for a short while and then ask your partner how they are feeling



KS2/SECONDARY – FIVE SENSES

This technique will take you through your five senses to help remind you of the present. The goal is to notice something that you are currently experiencing through each of your senses. This is a calming technique that can help young people to get through tough or stressful situations. The technique is easily adapted for pupils of any age by reducing the number of items per set. It can be done out loud or in their head, whichever is most comfortable or most appropriate for the situation. When teaching young people the technique it is better to do it out loud until they can be independent in using it. This exercise can be repeated if needed. The purpose is for the individual to remain in the present until they feel calm. It is OK to stop the process once this happens even if it is not complete.

What are 5 things you can see? Look around you and notice 5 things you hadn't noticed before. Maybe a pattern on a wall, light reflecting from a surface, or a knick-knack in the corner of a room.

What are 4 things you can feel? Maybe you can feel the pressure of your feet on the floor, your shirt resting on your shoulders, or the temperature on your skin. Pick up an object and notice its texture.

What are 3 things you can hear? Notice all the background sounds you had been filtering out, such as air-conditioning, birds chirping, or cars on a distant street.

What are 2 things you can smell? Maybe you can smell flowers, coffee, or freshly cut grass. It doesn't have to be a nice smell either: maybe there's an overflowing bin or drain.

What is 1 thing you can taste? Pop a piece of gum in your mouth, sip a drink, eat a snack if you have one, or simply notice how your mouth tastes. "Taste" the air to see how it feels on your tongue.

The numbers for each sense are only a guideline. Feel free to do more or less of each. Also, try this exercise while doing an activity like washing dishes, listening to music, or going for a walk.

5 4 3 2 1

SLOW DOWN & CALM DOWN

FIRST- TAKE 3 SLOW BELLY BREATHS!

5 List 5 things you can SEE



4 List 4 things you can FEEL



3 List 3 things you can HEAR



2 List 2 things you can SMELL



1 List something you like to TASTE



FINISHED? - TAKE ANOTHER 3 SLOW BELLY BREATHS

Butterfly Hug

The butterfly is an ancient symbol of transformation. 

An opportunity for soothing in the presence of fear, anxiety, and uncertainty.

PRACTICE SELF-SOOTHING

1

Sit or stand in a comfortable position.

Cross both arms in front of your chest and place each hand on your upper arms.

2

Begin gently tapping each hand one at a time on your arms.

Practice relaxed breathing. You may be surprised to discover you are feeling calmer.

3

If your level of anxiety or anger doesn't change at all, give yourself some more time with the butterfly hug and see what happens.

Take a moment while doing the butterfly hug and close your eyes.

.....

Using your imagination go to a place where you feel safe, calm, and content.

What images, colors, sounds, and scents do you observe in your safe place?

VISUALISATION/GUIDED IMAGERY

Guided imagery is the practice of imaging yourself into a desirable reality. It is a relaxation technique that uses positive mental images to influence how you feel. Guided imagery focuses on images, but this type of imagery helps you harness all your senses - sight, taste, sound, smell, and sensation.

Through guided imagery pupils can learn to use their imagination to "create the state they want," meaning that they can actually change how they are feeling and what they are focused on. Even very young children can begin to learn this skill by linking images in their minds with feelings and experiences.

When introducing pupils to this technique, it can be helpful to begin by focusing on the breath and encouraging them to breathe in a slow and steady rhythmic fashion. This can help them to focus and zone out the outside world.



ELEPHANT VISUALISATION



Close your eyes, and imagine that you are a great, wise elephant. Your toes are pearly white, your legs are long and strong, your tail flicks and swishes, your ears hear every whisper of wind, and your trunk stretches out from your face and reaches down to your knees. Take a great, deep breath in through your elephant trunk.... And slowly let it out, long and slow through your whole trunk. (Pause)

Feel the sun warm your grey skin, and maybe the grass is tickling your feet? As you are standing there, relaxing in the grass, you can see the sky above you. What do you see? Maybe a cloud? Or a bird? Or the leaves of a tree? The sky above you is big and blue, and the Earth below you is green and pebbly. Breathe in through your long trunk... and breathe out. Your big legs carry you to a stream. You use your trunk to carry water from the stream and whoosh it into your mouth for a drink, and whoosh it all over your body. The water feels cool, and you feel refreshed. You take a deep breath in through your trunk... and out, long, long exhale. (Pause).

You wade into the stream, cooling your feet and ankles as the sun pours over you. You shake the water droplets off your ears, and listen in as the birds chirp, singing their sweet songs.

THE PEBBLE MEDITATION (5 MINUTES)

Pretend you are standing next to a beautiful pond.

The sun is shining, and you can see it making sparkles on the water.

You can see some lovely flowers and can hear a frog croaking.

Pretend you are picking up a small pebble and throwing it in the water.

The pebble sinks into the water and goes further down, down, down.

The pebble is now at the bottom of the pond, can you see it?

Watch the pebble on the bottom of the pond, while you breathe in and out slowly.

(Adapted from The Little Book of Mindfulness by Dr Patrizia Collard)



PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION

Progressive Muscle Relaxation is a mindfulness exercise that is intended to help pupils slow down, to develop greater awareness of tension in their bodies, learning to accurately identify and diminish the signs and signals of stress and to help them let that tension go. It is based upon the simple practice of tensing, or tightening, one muscle group at a time followed by a relaxation phase with release of the tension.

Most practitioners recommend tensing and relaxing the muscle groups one at a time in a specific order, for example starting with your feet, and ending with the face. However, if time is short you can focus upon particular areas of the body – say working up from the abdomen to the face.

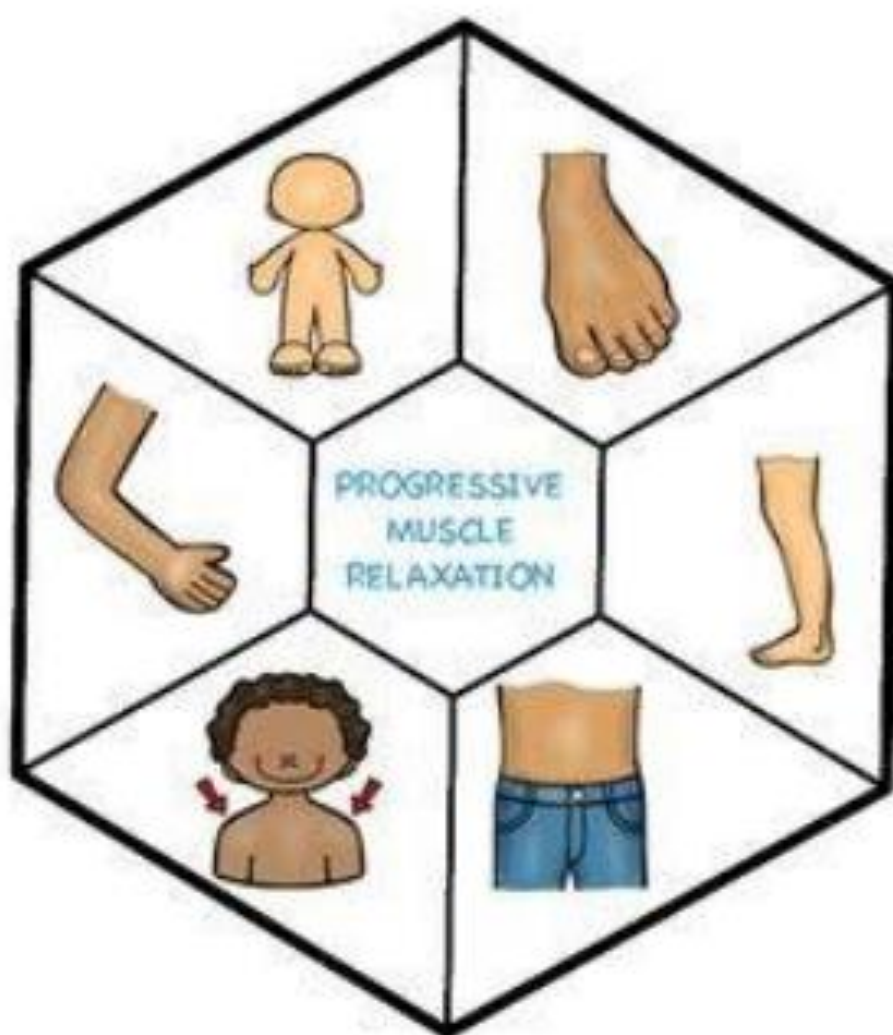
You can get pupils to practice this technique seated or lying down, and where possible children should be guided through this in a quiet place free of all distraction.

As pupils become more adept, you can get them to combine progressive muscle relaxation with controlled breathing, so breathing in as they tense, and exhaling as they release the muscle group, and also by using guided imagery, for example, getting them to imagine that their tension or stressful feelings are flowing out of their body as they relax each muscle group.

We would recommend doing this activity for a minimum of 5 minutes, but extending this as pupils become more familiar with the process. For younger pupils you might want to begin by focusing on particular muscle groups, for example, the shoulder, neck and facial muscles, as this is often where we hold most of our tension.

This practice has been found to be one of the most effective in supporting sleep and so you may want to set it as a homework task for pupils or recommended it to parents to try with their children as part of their bedtime routine.

SQUEEZE, COUNT TO 5, RELAX



KS1/LOWER KS2

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cDKyRpW-Yuc>

BODY SCAN

Similar to progressive muscle relaxation is body scanning, which involves getting pupils to pay attention to parts of their body and bodily sensations in a gradual sequence from feet to head but does not require the systematic tensing and release. Instead you should encourage pupils to breathe into any areas of tension or tightness in their bodies. The aim is that by mentally scanning yourself, you bring awareness to every single part of your body, noticing any aches, pains, tension, or general discomfort.



BODY SCAN EXERCISE



During the body scan exercise, you will pay close attention to physical sensations throughout your body. The goal isn't to change or relax your body, but instead to notice and become more aware of it. Don't worry too much about how long you practice but do move slowly.

Begin by paying attention to the sensations in your feet. Notice any sensations such as warmth, coolness, pressure, pain, or a breeze moving over your skin. Slowly move up your body - to your calves, thighs, pelvis, stomach, chest, back, shoulders, arms, hands, fingers, neck, and finally your head. Spend some time on each of these body parts, just noticing the sensations.

After you travel up your body, begin to move back down, through each body part, until you reach your feet again. Remember: move slowly, and just pay attention.

THE FOOT SCAN (5 OR 10 MINUTES)



Sit on the floor and keep your eyes closed with your feet out in front of you.

Think about your left foot.

Can you imagine/see in your head/feel your left foot...

Your big toe...

Your little toe...

All your toes in between...

The spaces in between your toes...

The heel of your foot...

The tips of your toes...

THE KNEE HUG (5 MINUTES)



Lie down on your back.

Keep your body relaxed.

Bend your legs, one leg at a time and lift them up to your chest.

Keep your back, neck, and head flat on the floor.

Hold onto your legs with your hands.

Breathe slowly in and out, in and out... (hold for a few minutes)

Gently let go of your knees and relax your body on to the floor.

Thank you to the following services for this training and resources:

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