

Relaxation and grounding techniques for daily practice and in high pressure situations

The Physiological sigh

- A physiological sigh is a simple breathing exercise, recently popularized, that can lower stress, improve your mood, and restore a feeling of calm.
- To perform the physiological sigh, take a deep inhale followed by a short second inhalation, and then an extended exhalation. Repeat one or two more times.

A certain type of voluntary sigh, called the physiological sigh, has been shown in recent research to be an effective way to alleviate stress quickly. This is called the physiological sigh. *D MORE:*

What is the Physiological Sigh?

A sigh is defined as an involuntary deep breath, controlled by two small clusters of neurons in the brain stem. This is then followed by an extended exhalation.

“A sigh starts out as a normal breath, but before you exhale, you take a second breath on top of it,” UCLA neuroscientist Jack Feldman, PhD,

The physiological sigh was discovered by scientists in the 1930s, but has recently been popularized as a way to lower stress by neuroscientist Andrew Huberman, PhD.

“Physiological signs were discovered in the 1930s as a pattern of breathing that people go into spontaneously when they are in claustrophobic environments, or in deep sleep,” Huberman explains.

He also notes that the physiological sigh is an excellent “in-the-moment” tool to combat stress. While there are powerful tools to combat stress like meditation, breathwork, good nutrition, good social connections, and avoiding all bad things in life, these types of tools require that people *step away* from the stress-inducing activity.

“By contrast, my lab and other laboratories have been very interested in developing tools that allow us to push back on stress... in real time, meaning without having to disengage from the stress-inducing activity,” Huberman says. “The best way that I am aware to do that is called the physiological sigh.”

The Science Behind the Physiological Sigh

The purpose of the sighing reflex is to protect your lungs. The delicate sacs in your lungs, called alveoli, can collapse, compromising the exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide (CO₂). That's why every five minutes or so, sighing happens, to bring in twice the volume of a normal breath to inflate the alveoli.

You can leverage this reflex to combat stress. Stress causes a change in your breathing rate and pattern. As your sympathetic nervous system — aka your “fight or flight” response — starts to dominate, your breathing becomes fast and shallow.

When you deliberately alter your breathing pattern with a sign, it interrupts this threat system, overriding your sympathetic nervous system and helping you self-soothe

How to Perform the Physiological Sigh

Based on Huberman's technique outlined in his video (see below), here's how you can perform the physiological sigh for stress relief.

1. Inhale deeply: Take a deep breath in through your nose, filling your lungs with air. Allow your diaphragm to expand as you breathe in.
2. Inhale again: Take a second breath – it will be shorter and your diaphragm won't expand as much.
3. Exhale completely: Release the air through your mouth.

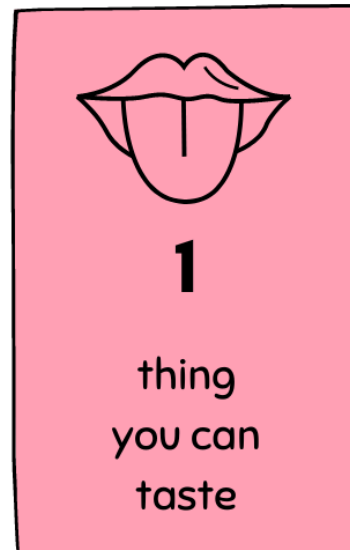
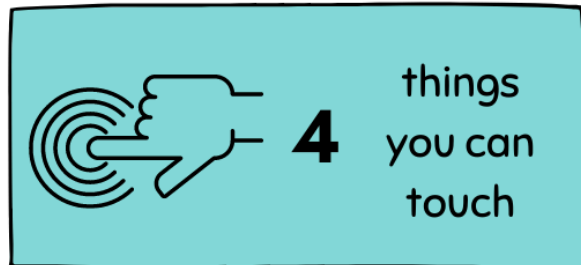
<https://youtu.be/rBdhqBGqiMc?feature=shared>

Repeat for two or three more times.

Grounding techniques

5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1 GROUNDING TECHNIQUE

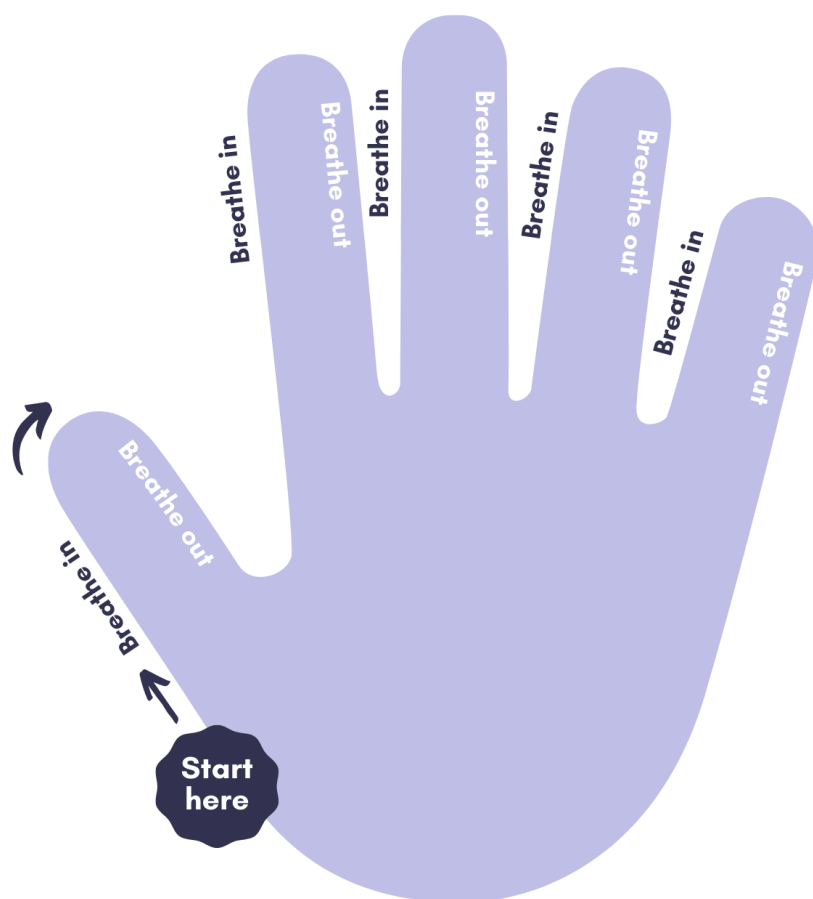
A calming technique that connects you with the present by exploring the five senses.



Choose a colour and find 10 things around you in that colour; choose a word or your name and find things that begin with each letter of the word around you

5 finger breathing

CALM YOURSELF WITH A **5 FINGER BREATHING** BRAIN BREAK



Slowly trace the outside of the hand with the index finger, breathing in when you trace up a finger and breathing out when you trace down. You can also do this breathing exercise using your own hand.

Thinking styles - Catch yourself doing these and see if you can flip them... What is a more positive and helpful way to look at the situation?

UNHELPFUL THINKING STYLES

AUTOMATIC, BIASED MENTAL SHORTCUTS

MENTAL FILTER

FOCUSING ON ONLY ONE ASPECT OF A SITUATION (OFTEN NEGATIVE) WHILE OVERLOOKING OTHERS (POSITIVE).



ALL OR NOTHING

ABSOLUTE THINKING FOCUSING ON EXTREMES. THERE IS NO IN-BETWEEN.

EMOTIONAL REASONING

INTERPRETING CURRENT EMOTIONS AS FACT.

CATASTROPHISING

EXAGGERATING A SITUATION IN THE NEGATIVE.

MAGNIFICATION AND MINIMISATION

MAGNIFYING THE POSITIVES IN OTHERS, WHILE MINIMISING YOUR OWN.



JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS

MIND READING:
ASSUMING WE KNOW
SOMEONE ELSE'S
THOUGHTS OR MOTIVES.



PREDICTIVE THINKING:
OVERESTIMATING
NEGATIVE EMOTIONS OR
OUTCOMES.

LABELLING

USING SWEEPING, NEGATIVE STATEMENTS TO DESCRIBE YOURSELF OR OTHERS.

PERSONALISATION

BLAMING YOURSELF UNNECESSARILY FOR EXTERNAL NEGATIVE EVENTS.



OVERGENERALISING

INTERPRETING A SINGLE, NEGATIVE EVENT AS THE NORM, OR ENDURING PATTERN.

SHOULD-HAVE AND MUST-HAVE STATEMENTS

PUTTING UNREASONABLE EXPECTATIONS ON ONESELF.

Wouldn't it be super if...

Let your brain combat the negative prediction system by finishing this sentence.
Wouldn't it be super if...

Mindfulness

Mindfulness is proven by meta-analysis of research to be a powerful tool to regulate the nervous system (flight / fight / freeze).

This yoga nidra protocol with Professor Andrew Huberman is 10 minutes long and a good way to check out. Do it every day as part of your practice.

<https://youtu.be/AKGmY8OSHM?feature=shared>

<https://www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk/information-about-autism/health-and-wellbeing/physical-mental-wellbeing/mindfulness>

Gratitude Journal

https://ggia.berkeley.edu/practice/gratitude_journal