



# Welcome!

The webinar will begin shortly...

Note: Your microphone is muted, and your camera is turned off.  
During the program, please use your device's speaker settings to adjust the sound level.

# Transition Overload

Mindfulness & Movement Methods to  
Find Calm, Clarity, and Manage Stress  
in an Overstimulated World

**Donald Altman MA, LPC**

MindfulPractices.com Mindful Living Newsletter  
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Simply Mindful Resilience: 101 Mindful Ways to Build Resilience

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# Brief Mindfulness Greeting

Using the CHAT function, share:

- 1) Your name and write one sentence about the work you do and what it was about this particular workshop that interested you.

Take a moment and appreciate the uniqueness of the people who are sharing this time with you.

Identifying  
Transitions  
&  
Compounding  
Change Events

## SHORT TERM TRANSITIONS:

DAILY ERRANDS

CRAVINGS/IMPULSES

SELF-CARE

CROSSING

THRESHOLDS

EMOTIONAL SHIFTS

URGENT TASKS

## MEDIUM TERM TRANSITIONS:

FAMILY CONCERNS

FINANCES

RELATIONSHIPS

CAREER

HEALTH

PACE OF CHANGE:  
MANAGING TECHNOLOGY,  
SOFTWARE UPDATES

## LONG TERM TRANSITIONS:

CHRONIC HEALTH ISSUES

COVID PANDEMIC

AGING PARENTS

RETIREMENT

DEBTS/OBLIGATIONS

LONG TERM PLANNING

# When Transitions Become Overload

## Transition Overload Reactions:

### Fight or Flight Response

Sympathetic Nervous System

*Irritation*                      *Worry*

*Frustration*                      *Anxiety*

*Anger*                              *Fear*

*Rage*                                *Panic*

### Freeze Response

Parasympathetic Nervous System/Dorsal Vagal pathway

*Helplessness*                      *Hopeless*

*Depression*                      *Shut Down*

*Numbness*

*Disassociation*



# Recuperation from Overload

## Social Engagement

Parasympathetic Nervous System (Ventral Vagal Pathway)

*Joy*

*Compassion*

*Presence*

*Grounded*

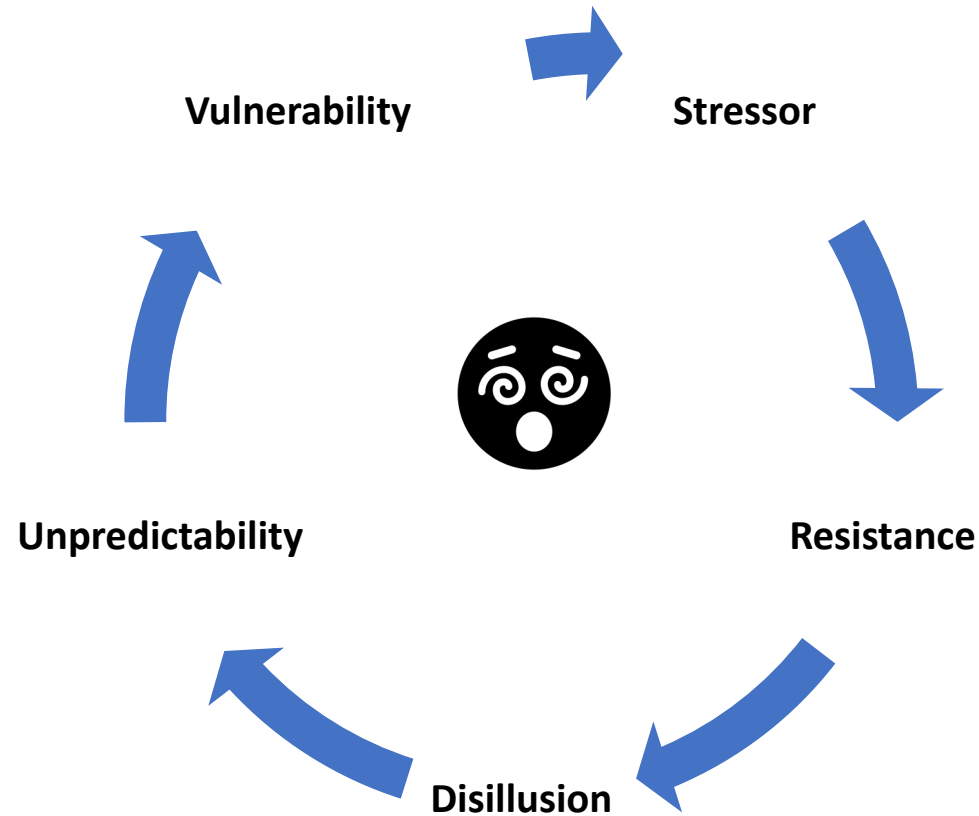
*Centered*

*Curious*

*Mindful*

*Content*

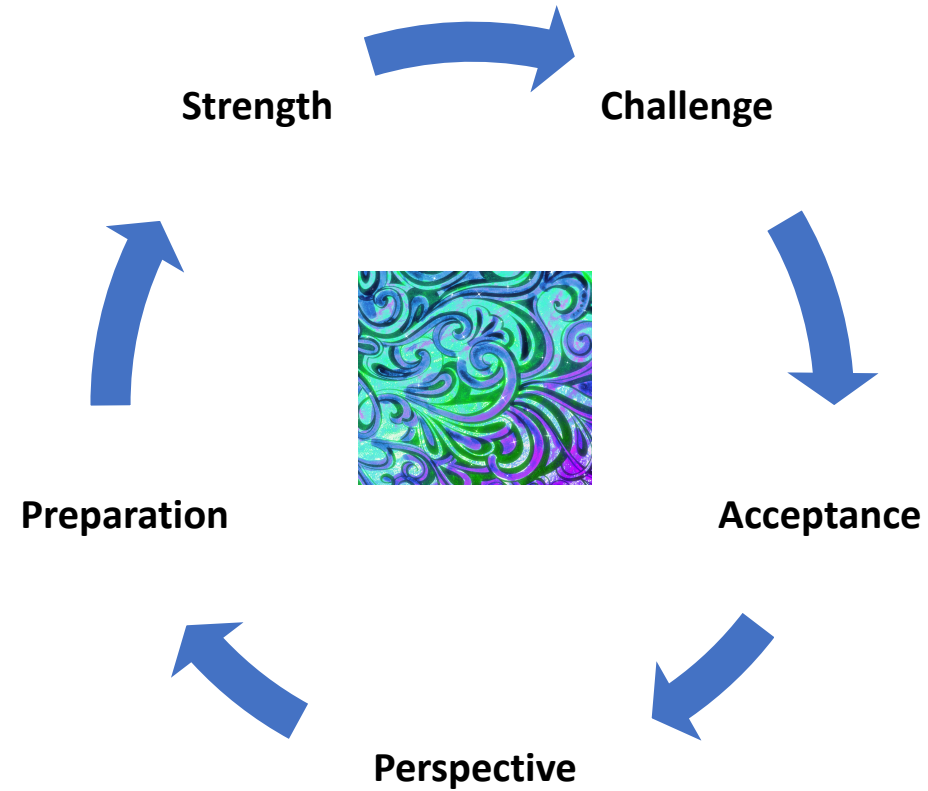
# Response to Transition Overload



References and adaptation of: **Posttraumatic Growth Models**

Calhoun & Tedeschi, 1999; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004; Calhoun, Cann & Tedeschi, 2010; Janoff-Bulman, Psychological Inquiry, January 2004

# Adaptive response to Transition Overload – A Reframe



# Mindfulness and Movement ROADMAP

Stress Reaction	Adaptive Response	Mindfulness and Movement Practices
Dysregulation	Centering/Grounding	<b>Personalized Movement Plan (PMP)</b>
Resistance	Acceptance/Strength	<b>S.T.O.P Technique</b>
Disillusionment	Perspective/Integration	<b>S.T.A.R. Reflection</b>
Vulnerability	Appreciation/Balance	<b>Palm the Present Moment</b>
Triggers/Trauma & Emotions	Balance/Gratitude	<b>G.L.A.D. Technique</b>
Unpredictability	Preparation/Center/Ground	<b>Head Heart Hara Practice</b>

# Connecting with Your Core Self through Gentle Movement

# GENTLE MOVEMENT FOLLOW-UP

Using the CHAT function, share in one or two words or sentences:

- 1) What movements were soothing, grounding, centering?
- 2) How might you use or adapt this movement during a transition?

Take a moment to read and appreciate the experiences of others.

# PERSONAL MOVEMENT PLAN (PMP)

## A Grounding & Centering Movement Plan

Stress Reaction	Adaptive Response
Dysregulation	Centering/Grounding

*Which movements were  
Soothing? Centering?  
Grounding?*

Choose **2-3 Movements** to create your Personal Movement Plan:

*Example-*

1. Shoulder Rolls 4-8x
2. Arms float up and down in front of body with breath
3. While seated, “march” in place

Practice during Transitions or repeat 3x/day to build resilience.

# Implementing the Personalized Movement Plan (PMP)

- Ideally, have clients incorporate a Calming, a Centering and a Grounding movement.
- If clients need assistance with identifying, see *Movement Meditations for Health and Wellbeing* handout at end of powerpoint for suggestions.
- Most effective when client identifies the movements.
- Use PMP when becoming stressed or emotionally overwhelmed, dysregulated or to build resilience.
- For those opposed to movement, remind them:

If you are breathing, you are moving. Imaginal movement is effective.



# Pausing to Accept Resistance to Change

Story and Strengths Brain

Relationship/Resources Brain

Environmental Brain (Inner  
Outer Stress)

Body Brain

# Affect Labeling and the Brain

Dispositional mindfulness is associated with greater widespread PFC activation and attenuated amygdala responses during affect labeling.

Affect labeling encourages participants to treat affective states as “objects” of attention, promoting a detachment from these negative states.

Neural Correlates of Dispositional Mindfulness During Affect Labeling, J. David Creswell, et. al., Psychosomatic Medicine 69:560 –565 (2007)

# Mindfulness Based Exposure Therapy for PTSD

- Combat veterans with PTSD used body scan, breathing, and self-compassion practices.
- MRI showed increased connections between brain areas related to less negative mind wandering and more present focused attention
- Over time, subjects showed increased capacity to volitionally shift attention from anxious states to present state attention.

King, A. P., Block, S. R., et. al. (2016), ALTERED DEFAULT MODE NETWORK (DMN) RESTING STATE FUNCTIONAL CONNECTIVITY FOLLOWING A MINDFULNESS-BASED EXPOSURE THERAPY FOR POSTTRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER (PTSD) IN COMBAT VETERANS OF AFGHANISTAN AND IRAQ. *Depress. Anxiety*, 33: 289–299. doi: 10.1002/da.22481

# Pausing to Accept Transitions and Cravings with S-T-O-P

Stress Reaction	Adaptive Response
Resistance	Acceptance/Strength

In the next minute, you could...

*S-T-O-P for Acceptance of*

*Transitions*

*Anxious Thoughts*

*Rumination*

*Reactivity*

*Craving and Urges*

# S-T-O-P Transition Practice

## S- STAND and ACCEPT

Take two or three calming breaths.

PHYSICAL GROUNDING

# S-T-O-P Transition Practice

## S- STAND and ACCEPT

Take two or three calming breaths.

## T- TUNE IN to the body.

*Scan from toes to head. Breathe into  
into tension, Name Emotion and let it  
go. Let thoughts go. Breathe it out.*

## PHYSICAL & MENTAL GROUNDING

# S-T-O-P Transition Practice

**S- STAND** and **ACCEPT**

Take two or three calming breaths.

**T- TUNE IN** to the body.

*Scan from toes to head. Breathe into  
into tension, Name Emotion and let it  
go. Let thoughts go. Breathe it out.*

**O- OBSERVE** *surroundings.*

*Find novel or pleasant things  
(colors, shapes, sounds, etc.)*

**SOOTHING GROUNDING**

# S-T-O-P Transition Practice

## S- STAND and ACCEPT

Take two or three calming breaths.

## T- TUNE IN to the body.

*Scan from toes to head. Breathe into into tension, Name Emotion and let it go. Let thoughts go. Breathe it out.*

## O- OBSERVE surroundings.

*Find novel or pleasant things  
(colors, shapes, sounds, etc.)*

**P- PREPARATION with STRENGTHS.** *Look at how to go forward right now—not reactively, but with choice and your strengths.*





# S-T-O-P Transition Ideas

- 1) Have clients practice this two or three times a day even if they don't need it.
- 2) Take Free Survey of 24 strengths at [viacharacter.org](http://viacharacter.org)

Adapting to Change:  
Finding Stability within the Body and through Movement

# Adapting to Change: A Developmental Perspective

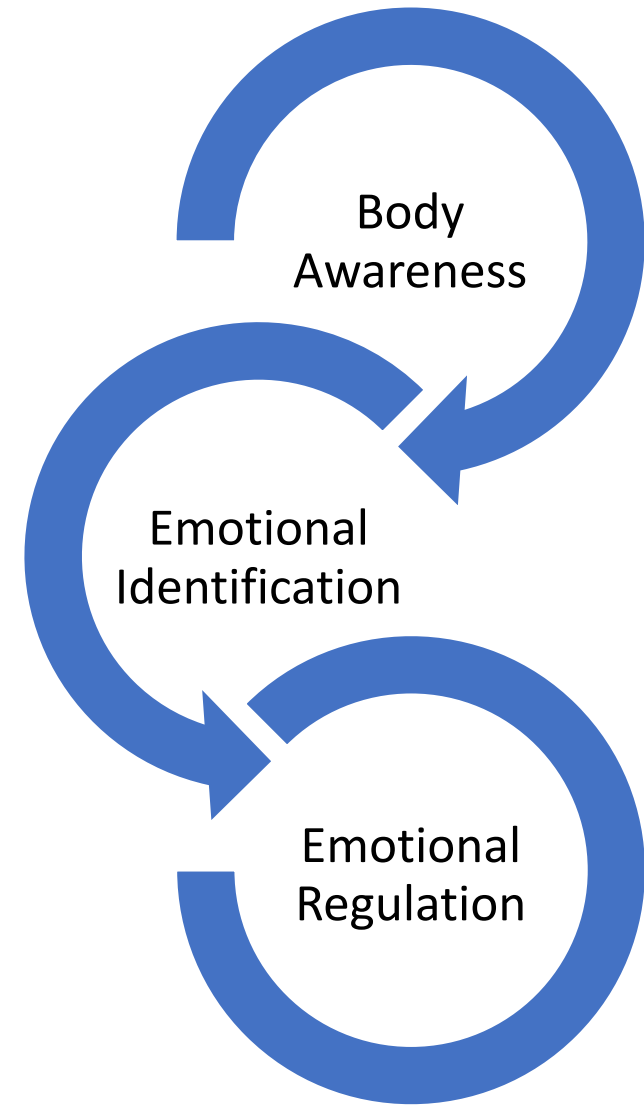
## Growth & Development is a Sensory Motor Process...

- We adapt, assimilate, accommodate, learn and explore through movement and sensory engagement.
- We develop through interpersonal relationships, social interaction and neural circuitry of the brain.
- Change and Development occurs throughout the Life Cycle.
- Our Sensory Motor experiences can assist us through change and transition overload!

...and a Process of Continuous Change.

# Adaptation to Change: Body Awareness, Emotions, & Self Regulation

1. **Emotions** lie within the musculature of the body.
2. The more in touch we are with body sensation, the more in touch we are with our emotions.
3. Emotional awareness leads to **Self Regulation**.
4. Body awareness and mindful movement help us manage **change and transition overload**.



Stress Reaction	Adaptive Response
Disillusionment	Perspective/Integration

Internal External  
Awareness

\*\*\*

Movement Meditation

\*\*\*

S.T.A.R Reflection

# \*STAR\*

## Reflection

With a softened awareness,  
write, scribble or  
sketch:

1. **Sensations**, felt sense
2. **Thoughts**, images, words, phrases
3. **Affects** – emotions, feelings
4. **Radiance** - where in your body or life do you radiate? How can you radiate your intention in the outer world.

<b>S</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>R</b>
<b>Sensations</b>	<b>Thoughts</b> (Images)	<b>Affects</b> (Emotions)	<b>Radiance</b>

Be open to *Metaphor,*  
*Color, Shape, Sound and Images*

*Allow perceptions to shift. Explore. Be curious.*

Trust. There is no need to grasp.  
*The space you created is healing in and of itself.*



## S.T.A.R Reflection Preparation:

Stress Reaction	Adaptive Response
Disillusionment	Perspective/Integration

This practice can be an **open-ended healing experience** or can be practiced with a **specific intention** in mind such as a difficult situation or a conflict your client is encountering.

# \*STAR\*

## Reflection

With a softened awareness,  
write, scribble or  
sketch:

1. **Sensations**, felt sense
2. **Thoughts**, images, words, phrases
3. **Affects** – emotions, feelings
4. **Radiance** - where in your body or life do you radiate?  
How can you radiate your intention in the outer world.

<b>S</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>R</b>
<b>Sensations</b>	<b>Thoughts</b> (Images)	<b>Affects</b> (Emotions)	<b>Radiance</b>

# S.T.A.R. FOLLOW-UP

Using the CHAT function, share one or two examples from reflection:


- 1) What sensations, images, affects were observed?
- 2) Where in you body do you feel radiance? Where in life?

Take a moment to read and appreciate the experiences of others.

# \*STAR\*

## Working with Clients

1. Hold the space and gentle focus, follow their lead.
2. Use *Sensations List* or Emoticons to prompt resonance.
3. Have them focus on one body part to explore. Head? Stomach? Heart?
4. The exercise connects unconscious and conscious material, which can deepen clinical exploration.
5. Close with Affirmation, Personal Movement Plan or grounding.

<b>S</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>R</b>
<b>Sensations</b>	<b>Thoughts</b> (Images)	<b>Affects</b> (Emotions)	<b>Radiance</b>
Nothing, Numb	 Plexiglass	Nothing, Helpless	Kind, Good Sense of humor


# \*STAR\*

## Client Example 2

A client with depression, grief, loss

A caregiver for her spouse who passed away after years of illness

Client struggling to find time and space for Self Care

<b>S</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>R</b>
<b>Sensations</b>	<b>Thoughts</b> (Images)	<b>Affects</b> (Emotions)	<b>Radiance</b>
Nauseous Heart feels spacious	 Pink Image of a Rose emerged	Love, Compassion	Breathe Lovingkindness and image of Rose into Heart as Self Care

“Boredom is simply lack of attention.”

-- Fritz Perls

*“The secret of health for both mind and body is not to mourn for the past, worry about the future, or anticipate troubles but to live in the present moment wisely and earnestly.”*

—The Buddha

# LACK OF PRESENCE and FRAGMENTATION

## A WANDERING MIND IS AN UNHAPPY MIND

- People's minds wander an average of 47% of the time
- Mind wandering (state of not being present) is ubiquitous across all activities. Mind wandering is a predictor of feelings of unhappiness.
- It's not the activity, but how present one is that increases happiness



# Mind Wandering and Telomeres

## Mind Wandering and Aging Cells

- Telomere length is a measure of biological aging and a correlate of severe stress.
- Individuals reporting high mind wandering had shorter telomeres.
- A present attention state may produce cell longevity.

*\*Clinical Psychological Science*  
Jan 2013 vol. 1 no. 1 (75-83)

# Transitional Skill: Palm the Present Moment

Stress Reaction	Adaptive Response
Vulnerability	Appreciation/Balance

## Physical Grounding Practice

Drop into the body...  
and rest the weary mind.

Acceptance for clearing out  
and managing the **RATS**:

**R**-umination

**A**-nxiety

**T**-ransitions

**S**-tress

# Palm the Present Moment

- 1) Get centered in body
- 2) Rubs palms together then place palms a foot apart
- 3) Slowly bring palms closer until they touch
- 4) Raise elbows and press palms together; Hold for four count
- 5) Release, letting go stress
- 6) Lower arms and hands onto legs; breathe out remaining stress
- 7) Stretch arms over head and exhale as arms come down

# Palm the Present Moment

## **Guidelines for Teaching Clients:**

- Frame as a portable tool for transitional stress.
- Always demonstrate and have client follow along.
- Give handout after teaching client.
- Schedule Practice Times.
- Follow-up and practice again next session to ensure effective use.

# Palm the Present Moment FOLLOW-UP

Using the CHAT function, share in one or two sentences:

- 1) What word or feeling would you use to describe this practice?
- 2) For what kind of transition(s) could this practice be useful?

Take a moment to read and feel gratitude for the experiences of others.

# Consistent Gratitude Practice

## PHYSICAL

- \* Stronger immune system
- \* Lower blood pressure
- \* Less bothered by pain
- \* Lower blood pressure
- \* Exercise more and take better care of health
- \* Sleep longer and feel more refreshed upon waking

## PSYCHOLOGICAL

- \* Increased positive emotions
- \* More alert, alive, and awake
- \* More joy and pleasure
- \* More optimism & happiness

## SOCIAL

- \* More helpful, generous, and compassionate
- \* More forgiving and more outgoing
- \* Feel less lonely and isolated

At the Movies... *Robert Emmons: Why Gratitude Is Good*

# G.L.A.D. Daily Snapshot\*

*G.L.A.D. is an acronym for finding joy and balance using cognitive, behavioral and mindfulness skills*

<b>Stress Reaction</b>	<b>Adaptive Response</b>
<b>Triggers/Trauma &amp; Emotions</b>	<b>Balance/Gratitude</b>



# G.L.A.D. Daily Snapshot\*

*G.L.A.D. is an acronym for finding joy and balance using cognitive, behavioral and mindfulness skills*

**G** - find one **Gratitude** you're thankful for today

**L** - find one new thing you **Learned** today

**A** - find one **Accomplishment** you did today

**D** - find one thing of **Delight** that touched you today

*Journal or write on an index card*

# Using G.L.A.D. at Home

*G.L.A.D. is an acronym for finding joy and balance using cognitive, behavioral and mindfulness skills*

- Make this a partner practice sharing all the **G.L.A.D.** elements you noticed that related to a significant person in your household. Then, they share their **G.L.A.D.** with you.
- At mealtime, go around the table as each person takes one letter from **G.L.A.D.** and shares that with others.
- Keep a **G.L.A.D.** journal that you can look back on and review.

*The Mindfulness Toolbox and Simply Mindful Resilience by Donald Altman*

# G.L.A.D. Technique FOLLOW-UP

Using the CHAT function, share in one or two sentences:

- 1) Share one of the letters- G, L, A, or D from your practice.
- 2) When could this practice be useful?

Take a moment to read and feel gratitude for the experiences of others.

<b>Stress Reaction</b>	<b>Adaptive Response</b>
Unpredictability	Preparation/Center/Ground

**Head**  
**Heart**  
**Hara**

**Meditation**

# Head Heart Hara Meditation

**Head** – soften space between the brows, release worries, mind clear like a sparkling lake, focused yet free, insight, clear intention

**Heart** – the portal of grace and compassion, warmth, radiant love to you, your concerns, and others. Be held and rest in love, drop intention into heart space

**Hara** – pelvic bowl, center of gravity, “gut.” drop awareness into hara to ground, release what is unneeded to earth for recycling, and plant your intention, seeds for wellness, growth, grounding

*Sense the sacred alignment and buoyancy  
of \* Head \* Heart \* Hara.*

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## **Movement Meditations for Health and Well Being by Maria Brignola**

**Complete 3- D Breath:** Inhale deeply through your nose allowing the ribs to expand and the lungs to fill. Feel the length, width and depth of your body. Hold briefly before slowly exhaling. As you breathe, imagine a balloon gradually inflating and deflating.

**Ground:** While standing with knees slightly bent, circle your hips slowly 4x in each direction. Feel your feet on the floor and imagine them like roots of a tree connecting to the earth. If seated, circle your weight/pelvis in the chair and concentrate on grounding with your sit bones and heels. Feel secure and stable.

**Center:** Inhale and fill belly. Exhale and press the belly button toward the spine. Repeat 4-8x tightening the power center (abdomen) with each exhalation. Rest. Then, breathe in and out smoothly focusing on your heart center (chest). Feel these two areas (belly and chest) in the center of your body and feel the length of your spine all the way up to your neck and head. Feel aligned, balanced, calm.

**Stretch:** Inhaling, reach arms overhead, stomach in, shoulders relaxed. Exhaling, slowly reach out and bend forward. Relax your head, neck and shoulders. Inhaling roll up. Repeat 2-3x. Stretch to the left with your right arm up and left arm down. Stretch to the right with the left arm up and right arm down. Repeat 2-3x.

**Strengthen:** Stand with hands on the back of a chair. Feet about shoulder width apart. Slowly bend knees and “sit” back as if sitting in a chair. Knees should be aligned over the ankles. Repeat 8-12x. Feel strong and stable.

**Balance:** Standing, slowly shift your weight to the right foot and then to the left maintaining a lengthened spine and shoulders aligned over hips. Imagine sand pouring from an hour glass as you shift your weight. After a few rounds of shifts, test your balance by lifting the opposite foot. Feel balanced in body and mind.

**Revitalize:** Inhale and lift arms straight in front of you. Hold your inbreath while you rapidly punch and pull your arms 10x in and out from your chest. Exhale and relax.

**Twist/Energize:** From a seated position, breathe in and lengthen spine. Exhaling twist to the left. Remain in the twist for a few cycles of breath. Repeat to the right.

**Release:** Standing, twist gently side to side allowing your arms to wrap around your body like a flag around a pole. Feel centered, stable yet free.

**Calm:** Breathe in “Calm” and breathe out “Ease.” Feel peace within your body.



## *The Mindfulness Toolbox* by Donald Altman

### Tool #12 –Palm the Present Moment

#### **LEARNING STYLES:**

The following learning styles are compatible with this practice:

*Bodily-Kinesthetic-Tactile*

*Visual-Spatial*

*Reflective-Intrapersonal*

#### ***Thoughts for Therapists***

Anxious clients are often caught up in a myriad of thoughts spinning in their head. For some, this rapid spinning of thoughts can even result in an overpowering sensation of nausea—almost like being on a boat that is bouncing up and down in choppy water. That makes sense when you consider that it has been estimated that the mind can generate up to 125 thoughts per second. Getting solidly rooted or grounded back in the body is one method for calming down, quieting the anxious or ruminating mind, and getting back onto more firm and peaceful ground.

In addition to anxiety, this practice is a good way of creating space from any negative emotional feeling, ruminating thoughts, or feelings of being overwhelmed from stress or chaos. I also recommend this as a tool for when clients come into the counseling office and are not settled down due to the demands of time pressures, traffic congestion, getting a parking space, etc. Spending a minute or two getting grounded and centered at the start of a session can help the client enter a more receptive space.

One of the advantages of the *Palm the Present Moment* practice is that is portable and easy to use. It offers a multi-purpose means of centering to counter anxiety—especially when transitioning from one physical location or situation to another. (This is also a useful one-minute mindfulness technique for therapists to use between sessions for the same reasons.)

### ***Tips for Working with Clients***

- ✓ *Palm the Present Moment* practice is a readable script that you can use in session to guide clients through the practice. Do this prior to giving them the handout.
- ✓ Follow along with the movements so patients can visually see you model this practice for them.
- ✓ Other sense grounding practices for anxious clients that can be bundled with this one include:
  - Tool #13, *Ground Surfing*
  - Tool #16, *BE-THIS Sense Grounding*
  - Tool #33, *Squeeze Out Stress*
  - Tool #35, *Take a Stress Pause*

## HANDOUT: Palm the Present Moment GUID

**Instructions:** Use this portable grounding meditation script whenever you find yourself getting anxious, worried, feeling overwhelmed, lost in negative thoughts, or feeling uncertain about the future while transitioning from one place to another. Spend as much time as necessary to do this the first time.

Once you're familiar with how to *Palm the Present Moment*, you can shorten the process and do this in just one-minute, if desired.

*Sit in a comfortable chair and take a couple of nice, long, calming breaths.*

*Now, just raise your hands up to the height of the heart center, with the palms facing one another—about a foot or so apart. Notice how much tension there is in just holding the arms and hands up in the air.*

*Next, ever so slowly, bring the hands closer until you feel even the slightest or subtle sensation of energy, pressure, heat, or warmth. Stop when you feel this, and just notice this for a few moments. Observe closely this sensation. Is the heat, warmth, energy, or pressure constant? Or, does it vary slightly moment to moment?*

*Now, gently move the palms closer until just the fingertips come together with the most feathery, lightest touch. Imagine that the molecules from the fingertips of your right hand are dancing with the molecules of the fingertips of your left hand. You might even think about what dance they are doing... the foxtrot, the samba, the tango, the waltz, or the jitterbug.*

*Now, you continue to bring your palms together until they lightly touch. As you do this, notice how the fingers straighten out and how more heat builds up between the palms. With your palms together, this is a good time to pause for a few moments and have appreciation for the body, which is a precious gift that we possess. We can also reflect on the words of former priest and author John*

*O'Donohue who wisely wrote in Anam Cara: A Book of Celtic Wisdom, "Your body is the only home in the universe."*

*(Rest in silent appreciation for 5-10 seconds)*

*Now, let's spend a few moments to see what it's like to tense, and then relax the body. Keeping your palms touching, raise your elbows up to the side. Press with only ten percent of the total pressure you could exert. Now, press your hands together even harder—up to twenty percent of total pressure.*

*Stop pressing if you feel any pain. Press only as hard as you experience no pain or discomfort.*

*Again, observe how far up your arm the tension goes. Does it extend to the wrists, the elbows, the shoulders, the shoulder blades, the back, the chest? Maybe you feel more heat building in the palms of your hands? Which muscles are tense? After about five seconds of this, let your shoulders and elbows relax and fall. Release all this tension. Notice how nice it is to let go of tightness and tension in the body.*

*Finally, very slowly open your palms, like flower blossoms opening to the morning sun. Sense the coolness in your palms as the heat dissipates. Finally, let the weight of gravity tug on your hands and arms, letting these gently fall like leaves from a tree, until they come to rest on your lap or legs. Take a nice, long inhale, and as you exhale, imagine all the remaining stress draining out with the exhale down your legs and out of the bottom of your feet—where it will flow into the Earth for recycling. If you want, just sit for a few more moments in appreciation for the body that follows your commands and carries your consciousness so you can achieve your life goals. How marvelous!*

## Words to Describe Sensations by Maria Brignola

achy	tender	numb
airy	tense	pounding
adjusting	thick	pressure
alive	tickling	disconnected
binding	tingling	dizzy
blocked	twitchy	draining
bruised	tight	dull
bubbly	vacuous	electric
breathless	vibratory	empty
buzzy	vibrant	floaty
clenched	sparkly	flowing
cold	vital	fluid
congested	warm	fluttery
constricted	wavy	frozen
contracted	wobbly	full
cool	itchy	hard
queasy	dark	heavy
expansive	dense	hollow
shivery	prickly	hot
relaxed	pulsating	icy
releasing	radiating	light
spacey	soft	knotted
smooth	suffocated	open
rigid	soothed	nauseous
streaming	throbbing	
sweaty		

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## S-T-O-P Grounding Practice

Excerpted from: *The Mindfulness Toolbox: 50 Tools and Handouts for Depression, Anxiety, Pain & Stress* by Donald Altman, LPC

Are things speeding up in your life? Do you feel like you just don't have a moment to take a breather? Are you feeling overwhelmed, over stimulated, and pressured to make too many decisions too fast?

Fortunately, this easy exercise is an ideal way to create a buffer from speed, stress, cravings, and to slow things down a bit. If you're stressed and reactive, and feel that you would benefit by stepping back, this could be just the way to open a new doorway.

### ***Instructions:***

Use the acronym S-T-O-P to take a pause anytime, anywhere. Simply state each letter and then follow along with what it means. "STOP" doesn't mean to stop everything, but rather, to be present and at ease and in flow with what is happening all around you. From this centered, flexible, and aware place, you don't have to react out of fear or impulse. You can be more available in order to make better choices and observe all the options and possibilities before you.

**S-Stand and Slow Down:** You are going slow down the pace by standing in place and taking three nice, calming, deep belly breaths. By doing this you are making a conscious and purposeful decision to slow things down. You are deciding to be in control, rather than let external pressures trigger you to reaction and stress.

**T-Tune-In to Mind and Body:** In this moment you will bring your presence to first the mind, and then the body. This is just like tuning into a TV or radio station. You will tune into the thought or mind station for a few moments, and then change the channel as you next tune into the body.

1) The Mind: If your mind has been spinning or going quickly, just notice what it's thinking *right now*. Whether the mind is thinking of the past or future, whether it is worrying or anxious, you can simply notice *the mind as it is*—just as you would observe any object from a distance. Then let it go—or change the station.

2) The Body: Starting at the tips of the toes and quickly moving up to the top of the head, say “Hello” to the body. If there is tension, tightness or an emotion, notice where it is. Take another nice, long breath and see if the tension lessens. You can release the tension or emotion as you exhale, visualizing that this drains down the body and out of the bottom of the feet—and then back into the Earth for recycling.

**O-Observe:** Now you will take a few moments to observe your surroundings. Notice one to three pleasant things in your immediate environment—a pleasing sight, sound, color, object, texture, or smell. Or, you could notice one novel or unique thing that you have never observed before. If you are in a familiar environment, look for even the smallest detail you may not have noticed before—like the space between the wood grains on the table, or the different shades of color in the carpet. Even one pleasant or unique thing would be good. Just immerse yourself in the surroundings like this for a minute or two.

**P-Possibility & Potential:** Look around the world with openness and possibility. This is an opportunity for you to tap into the potential that exists in this new moment. If you had been feeling reactive or angry, for example, you can look with fresh eyes at the variety of different options before you. Right now, for example, you could sing, you could smile, you could call a supportive friend, or you could get a scoop of your favorite yogurt ice cream. Stretch your mind and see how far it can go!

**Reflections:** What was it like for you to S-T-O-P in this way? What did you notice most?

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What kinds of new possibilities could this practice help you to find? How could you get creative with using this practice?

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