

Riding the Coronacoaster

Increasing your mind body awareness to lower stress and tension

Both of these simple exercises take only a few moments. They switch your body (via the autonomic nervous system) **from a heightened and distressed state** (the sympathetic fight/flight/freeze response) **to physical and psychological calm** (the parasympathetic rest and digest system).

Do either of these anytime you feel overwhelmed, disconnected, tense, or anxious. They are helpful before sleep, or if you wake in the night and have trouble sleeping.

Calm app is also wonderful for night-time - <https://www.calm.com>

Teach these to your children! They also feel stress and tension and often don't have the words or explanations for it and hold them within. Our body needs to discharge stress. These simple exercises will help you do that.

The body as a container for our feelings

The body is our container for all our sensations and feelings. When we connect to our outer container (external body) and tune IN to our internal experience, we feel more grounded and in control. We experience feelings *contained*, rather than from a state of overwhelm and lack of control.

To begin, I invite you to simply notice your body and breath right now, in this moment.

Out of 10, how tense do you feel? _____

Exercise 1: Heart breath

1. Place an open hand on the middle of your chest
2. Gently place the other hand on top
3. Bring your attention to your hands, the warmth, comfort and feeling of support and holding
4. Breathe slowly and deeply here
5. Inhale the breath into your belly, then up into the chest
6. Exhale the breath from your chest and down from your belly
7. Breathe into the stillness and slowing down in your body
8. Give yourself a few minutes here to calm the body and nervous system
9. Ground yourself through this breath

[Sharlene Townes](#)

www.thebarefoottherapist.com.au

ABN: 84 965 450 985 | REG. 26636

0482 502 394

Exercise 2:

1. Place your right hand under the arm on the side of the heart
2. Bring your left hand onto your shoulder / upper arm
3. If it feels comfortable to do so, close your eyes
4. Breathe
5. Feel into your body, simply notice what you find here
6. Breathe here for a minute or so

Exercise 3:

1. Place your right hand across your forehead
2. Bring your left hand to your chest
3. If it feels comfortable to do so, close your eyes
4. Breathe
5. Feel into your body, into the space between your hands
6. Simply notice what you find there
7. Breathe here for a few moments until you feel a shift within your body
8. When you notice this shift, move your right hand down to your belly
9. Breathe
10. Feel into your body, into the space between your hands
11. Simply notice what you find here
12. Breathe here for a few moments until you feel a shift within your body

After any of these, simply notice your body and breath. Has anything changed? Out of 10, how tense do you feel now? _____

Most people experience a shift in their feelings of distress, anxiety and tension. If you haven't this time, don't worry. The more you do them, the more tuning in will feel natural.

Other ways to ground and increase coping skills

The Physical:

- **Exercise:** stay active in any way that makes you *feel good* – walk, run, yoga, dance, weights - all of these can be done in or close to home
- **Vitamin D:** get your daily dose of vitamin D – 10-15 minutes in early or late sunshine is essential for the immune system. If you can't get out, ask your doctor to find out if you need a vitamin D supplement
- **Nutrition:** keep the good food coming. Nurture your body and increase your physical energy and wellbeing through great nutrition and the pleasure of food
- **Sleep:** create a sleep ritual to prepare for rest intentionally and improve the quality of your sleep – sleep is everything right?! Regular, quality sleep enhances your ability to meet each new day with

[Sharlene Townes](#)

www.thebarefoottherapist.com.au

ABN: 84 965 450 985 | REG. 26636

0482 502 394

energy and a positive mindset. I love this tea for sleep - <https://atouchoftea.com.au/product/sweet-dreams/> - I buy it online from a small tea shop in Bowral. If you would prefer to source your own close to home, look for a sleep tea with some or all of these ingredients: passionflower, chamomile, lemon balm, valerian, skullcap, hops.

The Psychological:

- limit news and social media to only what's needed – it's very easy to feel overwhelmed by the constant barrage of information and conflicting opinions
- be mindful of how much your children are absorbing too and answer their questions as honestly as you can so they feel included and supported
- provide stability through routine – take the thinking out of it by setting up routines that support a rhythm of life full of habits that support resilience and wellbeing
- focus efforts on activities that bring you fulfilment – there is enough doom and gloom – bring in the joy!
- avoid isolating yourself and talk to your people - even if it has to be on a screen – we are social beings and we quickly feel less alone when we connect, connect, connect
- release overwhelming thoughts and emotions creatively through writing, journaling, drawing, paint by numbers, colouring and more. These activities are not just for your kids! Creative expression soothes fears by releasing thoughts and feelings that otherwise circulate round and find no resolution
- come back to what you can control and let the rest go. When we can focus on what is in our control we are more likely to experience flow and an ease in the unfolding situation.

The Spiritual:

- meditate, pray, or find time throughout the day to simply stop, pause for a few moments and breathe. Sitting quietly and tuning in brings you back to the 'here and now' experience and lifts you out of future-thinking and constant worry.

***“Life is not a problem to be solved,
but a reality to be experienced.”***

– Soren Kierkegaard

[Sharlene Townes](#)

www.thebarefoottherapist.com.au

ABN: 84 965 450 985 | REG. 26636

0482 502 394