CHAPTER 15

Somatic Resources

Internal Somatic Resources

Purpose: To become aware of the internal somatic resources you already use that help you enjoy yourself, regulate your arousal, or feel good in some way.

Directions: Read the list of internal somatic resources (i.e., postures, movements, or gestures) that you might use spontaneously below, and write in any additional somatic resources you use in the empty boxes.

Hugging yourself	Curling up in a ball	Being still, not moving	Placing your hand on your heart	
Rocking side to side or front to back	Stretching your neck or other part of the body	Massaging your arms, neck, legs, or other area	Rubbing your temples or other part of the body	
Twirling your hair, biting your lip	Wrapping up in a blanket	Moving (jiggling your foot, walking, running, pacing, squirming)	Squeezing or rubbing your hands together	

Throughout the next week be aware of whether you use any of these resources. In the chart below, write down the resources you used throughout the week, the circumstance and internal experience that led you to use them, and how each helped you.

Internal Somatic Resource	Circumstance and internal experience that led you to use it	Effects of using the resource
Hugged myself and curled up in a ball.	*My husband went on a business trip and left me alone for the weekend. I was missing him. My body felt heavy and hollow. I felt lonely.*	*I felt better, my breathing deepened, and I felt more in touch with myself. I still missed my husband, but I didn't feel as sad.*
Rubbed my temples.	*I felt tense and stressed at work when I realized I might not meet my deadline. I felt upset and wasn't able to focus.*	*I didn't feel so agitated, and my arousal came down. I was able to focus a little better.*

At the end of the week, review the somatic resources you already use with your therapist. Together you can determine how to call upon these resources in moments when you need help to regulate your arousal, want to feel more energized or calmer, or just want to feel better.

© Pat Ogden. From Ogden, P., & Fisher, J. (2014). ***Sensorimotor psychotherapy: Interventions for trauma and attachment***. New York: W.W. Norton.

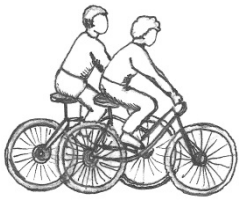
CHAPTER 15

Somatic Resources

External Somatic Resources

Purpose: To become aware of the external somatic resources that you already use, assess whether they are calming or energizing, determine their effectiveness, and identify additional resource you could use the future.

Directions: Read the list of external somatic resources below, and notice which ones you use throughout the week. Add any others that you use in the empty spaces provided. Put a "🡻" by the ones that comfort or calm you and a "🡹" by the ones that energize you. You might notice that the same resource may have a different effect at different times. Review your list at the end of the week and answer the prompts at the bottom.








Key: 🡻 = Calming Resource 🡹 = Energizing Resource

Walking or running	Going to the gym	Dancing
Skateboarding or roller blading	Taking a shower or bath	Petting or playing with a pet
Snuggling with your kids or partner	Holding hands	Having sex
Using sensory stimuli (soft afghan, scents, tastes, colors) to calm or increase arousal	Playing group sports (volleyball, basketball, baseball, handball)	Skiing, sledding, snowboarding, ice skating, or engaging in other winter activities
Feeling a breeze or the warmth of the sun on your skin	Swimming, building sandcastles, or engaging in other summer activities	Getting a massage or other form of bodywork
Relaxing on a cushy sofa or hammock	Enjoying a hot or cold drink	Using a heating pad on shoulders
Floating in a pool	Playing with children	Bouncing on a therapy ball
Getting a pedicure or manicure	Biking	Breathing fresh air
Swinging, rocking in a rocking chair	Lifting weights	Doing yoga or stretching
Holding an object (a stone, a stuffed animal, squishy ball)	Getting your hair washed by a hairdresser	Boating, canoeing, kayaking, water skiing

Which ones were the most effective calming resources?

Which ones were the most effective energizing resources?

Which other resources could you begin using that you did not use during the week?

© Pat Ogden. From Ogden, P., & Fisher, J. (2014). ***Sensorimotor psychotherapy: Interventions for trauma and attachment***. New York: W.W. Norton.

CHAPTER 15

Somatic Resources

Centering: Hand on Heart, Hand on Belly



Purpose: To explore the centering resource of placing your hands on your torso and be mindful of the effect of your hands touching your body.

Directions: Follow the prompts to practice this somatic resource and then complete the chart.

1. Try placing one hand on your heart and one on your lower belly. Sense the weight of your hands on your torso, the coolness or warmth of your hands, the movement of your breath under your hands. Take your time to notice what happens in your body as you place your two hands over your heart and belly.

2. Mindfully experiment with other hand positions on your torso to discover whether another position is more resourcing for you (e.g., place your hands on different areas of your torso or place both hands over your heart or over your belly, or press a pillow against your torso). Take your time to experience the effect of each position. Notice the quality of the touch, the pressure, warmth or coolness, and the feel of your breathing. Be mindful of what happens in your body as you compare these positions to each other and to the position in # 1.

3. Identify the hand position that feels "right" and is most centering for you.

4. Mindfully practice this resource at least three times during the week when you feel triggered or upset and record your experience below.

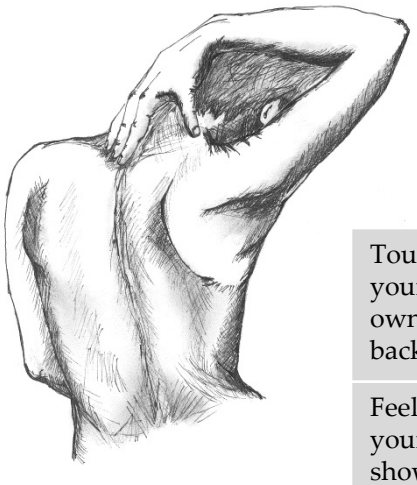
Trigger or situation that prompted resource use	**What was happening in your body when you felt triggered?**	**What happened in your body when you used the resource?**
Boss yelled at me about being late to work	*Heart pounding; blood rushing in my ears; felt very still*	*Breathing slowed; heart rate calmed; felt more settled and relaxed in my body*

© Pat Ogden. From Ogden, P., & Fisher, J. (2014). ***Sensorimotor psychotherapy: Interventions for trauma and attachment***. New York: W.W. Norton.

CHAPTER 15

Somatic Resources

CONNECTING WITH THE BACK OF THE BODY



Purpose: To explore resources that help you become aware of the back of your body in order to support feeling better in some way.

Directions: Try out the resources below that are designed to stimulate sensations in and increase awareness of your back, or try another way that you think of, being mindful of the sensations you generate as you use the resource and of the sensations in your back after you complete each exercise. Then follow the prompts.

Touch and massage your back with your own hands, or get a back massage.	Press or move your back against a wall, the floor (lying down), or the back of a chair.	Move your spine, bending forward and back, side to side. Try an undulating motion.
Feel the water on your back in the shower, or use a back scratcher.	Reach your fingertips toward your spine on your middle back, letting your hands rest on your ribs. Feel your ribcage moving as you breathe.	Slowly walk backwards in a safe space outdoors or in your home, letting your back be your "eyes."

1. Which of these resources felt best and most resourcing to you?

3. What emotions or thoughts do you have after you connected with your back? (e.g., *I feel competent and less vulnerable. I have the thought that I can protect myself. I feel calm.*)

4. Describe what happened in your body after you connected with your back or as you were connecting with it. (e.g., *I felt more sensation in my back, breathed more deeply, and felt a sense of protection and strength in my back.*)

5. Use the resource that felt best to you during or after a triggering situation occurs and record what happens below.

Trigger/situation that prompted resource use	**What was happening in your body?**	**What back resource did you use?**	**What happens in your body as you use the resource?**
I had to speak in front of my class, and I felt really nervous.	*My heart was beating fast, my breathing was shallow, and my eyes bugged out.*	*I pressed my back into the back of my chair and focused my attention on the sensation of the pressure.*	*I felt my eyes relax. After a few moments, I took a deep breath.*

© Pat Ogden. From Ogden, P., & Fisher, J. (2014). ***Sensorimotor psychotherapy: Interventions for trauma and attachment***. New York: W.W. Norton.

CHAPTER 15

Somatic Resources

Containment Resources

Purpose: To explore resources that bring awareness to your skin and superficial muscles in order to better sense your physical "container" and help you tolerate and contain the thoughts, emotions, sensations, or memories that you experience.

Directions: Try each of the different containment resources below and describe the effects on your thoughts, emotions, and body. You can try the ones that work best when you are feeling dysregulated or stressed, and discover which ones are most resourcing for you. Make a star next to any that are most useful to you and discuss with your therapist.

Use your hands to squeeze the muscles all over your body—head, face, neck, arms, back, hands, chest, belly, hips, arms, legs, feet. Then try tapping your body with your fingertips. Be mindful of the sensations this produces all over the container of your body.

- Thoughts
- Emotions
- Body

Explore tightening the muscles all over your body, sensing how the tension literally hardens your container. Sense the feeling of being less permeable, and perhaps more able to keep things out, and more able to contain your emotions and thoughts.

- Thoughts
- Emotions
- Body

Use a loofah, washcloth, or soft brush to rub all over your skin on one side of your body and be mindful of the sensations this activity stimulates. Then pause before you do the other side to notice the difference in the two sides. You might try this resource in the shower or bath.

- Thoughts
- Emotions
- Body

Wrap yourself up in a blanket or a shawl. You can do this in bed or while seated in a chair. Pull the blanket or shawl as tight as feels good to you in order to capture that feeling of being swaddled and snug.

- Thoughts
- Emotions
- Body

In a seated position, with your feet flat on the floor, cross your arms and place each palm on the inside of the opposite knee. Then while pressing outward with your hands, press your knees inward against yours palms. Hold the pressure as long as you like, then release and repeat.

- Thoughts
- Emotions
- Body

© Pat Ogden. From Ogden, P., & Fisher, J. (2014). ***Sensorimotor psychotherapy: Interventions for trauma and attachment***. New York: W.W. Norton.

CHAPTER 15

Somatic Resources

ADJUSTING SENSORY STIMULATION

Purpose: To identify sensory resources that calm or energize you, and list specific sensory stimuli that you find unpleasant or that bother you.

Directions: Think about how you intuitively use sensory stimuli and sensory activities as resources. For each of the senses, put a "🡻"next to those stimuli that are calming for you and a "🡹" next to those that are energizing. Add more stimuli you enjoy in each category that you already use or might want to use. List the stimuli in each category that bother you. Then write down one situation in which you might want to use a sensory resource in that category. (e.g., *I'll put on calm music before bed; I'll wear an eye mask to see if I fall asleep more quickly*).

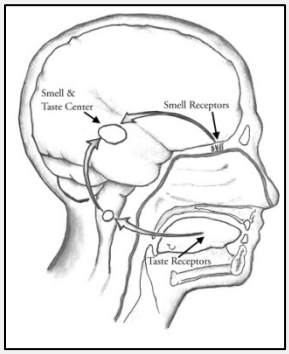
Sense of Taste

Tastes you enjoy:

- Favorite foods and flavors
- Sweet: fruit, ice cream, honey, desserts
- Salty: pretzels, popcorn, soup, cheese
- Savory: meat, fish, cheese, mushrooms, fermented beans, cured meats
- Sour: lemons, yogurt, sauerkraut, pickles
- Bitter: ginger, dark cocoa, beer, tea, spinach
- Other tastes you enjoy:

List tastes that bother you:

Situation in which you could use taste as a resource:



Sense of Smell

Scents you enjoy:

- Favorite scents
- Candles, soap, perfume or cologne, or lotion
- Food vendor or kitchen smells you love
- Smells of different seasons or weather conditions
- Flowers, leaves, or freshly cut grass
- The smell of someone you are close to
- Other smells you enjoy:

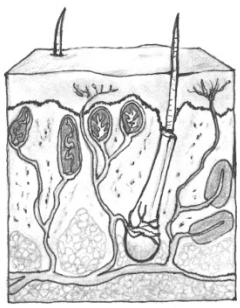
List smells that bother you:

Situation in which you could use smell as a resource:

Sense of Touch

Tactile stimulation you enjoy:

- Soft fabric, fur, or hair
- Warm baths or showers
- Massage
- Putting on lotion or sunscreen
- Scrubbing your skin
- Food textures and temperatures
- Snuggling with a person or pet
- Running your fingers through your hair
- Other textures or types of touch you enjoy:



Sensory Receptors in the Human Skin

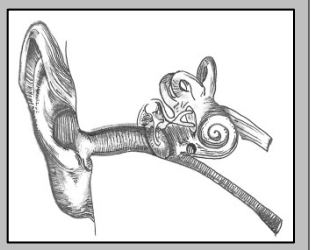
List textures or types of touch that bother you:

Situation in which you could use touch as a resource:

Sense of Hearing

Sounds you enjoy:

- Kinds of music you like
- Loud or soft sounds
- Energizing or calming music
- Particular singers, composers, songs, or compositions
- Natural sound recordings
- Silence, wearing earplugs
- Moving water
- Chanting, repeating a mantra
- The sound of someone's voice
- Other sounds you enjoy:



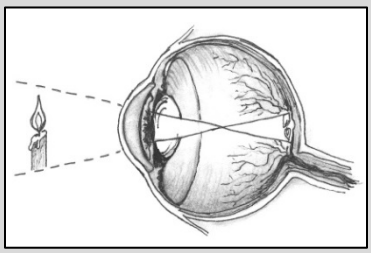
List sounds that bother you:

Situation in which you could use sound as a resource:

Sense of Sight

Sights you enjoy:

- Bright light, shade, or darkened rooms
- Candles, dawn, midday, dusk, twilight
- Sights you particularly love (e.g., sunsets, the ocean, mountains, the sky, green hills, rivers, your partner's eyes, a kind face, the place where you grew up)
- Favorite colors
- Other sights you enjoy:



List sights that bother you:

Situation in which you could use sight as a resource:

© Pat Ogden. From Ogden, P., & Fisher, J. (2014). ***Sensorimotor psychotherapy: Interventions for trauma and attachment***. New York: W.W. Norton.

Grounding Yourself

GROUNDING RESOURCES, PART 1

Purpose: To practice grounding resources and discover ones that best help you to sense a connection with the ground.

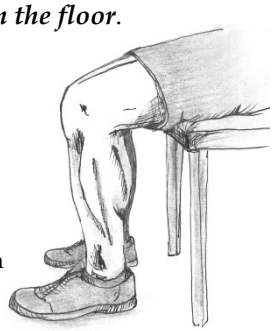
Directions: Follow the prompts below to discover what changes you notice after you try out the two grounding resources. Then use these resources when you feel ungrounded.

Feet on the Floor

1. **Before:** Be mindful of your thoughts, emotions, and body and write down your experience of the building blocks below.

Thoughts	
Emotions	
Body	

2. Practice pressing your ***feet on the floor***.



- Sitting, place both feet on the floor, with your feet and thighs both pointed forward and lower legs perpendicular to the floor.
- Press one foot firmly into the floor, then the other, engaging your thighs and buttocks, then push both feet into the floor at the same time.
- Notice the sensations in your legs, feet, and back as you press your feet into the floor.
- Sense the effect on your spine and the rest of your body.
- Keep doing this until you feel sensations in your lower legs and feel grounded.

3. **After:** Write down the differences you notice in your body, emotions, and thoughts in the boxes below.

Thoughts	
Emotions	
Body	

Attention on Your Feet

1. **Before:** Be mindful of your thoughts, emotions, and body and write down your experience of the building blocks below.

Thoughts	
Emotions	
Body	

2. Practice focusing ***attention on your feet.***



- Standing, direct your mindful attention to your feet.
- Notice the soles of your feet, the tops of your feet, your toes, your ankles.
- Notice if they feel hot, cold, achy, tired, numb, tense, or relaxed.
- Hold on to a piece of furniture and lift one leg, wiggle your toes, and stretch your feet and ankles, noticing the sensations, then switch to the other foot.
- Standing with both feet flat on the floor, imagine letting your feet soften as if they were melting butter or soft clay. Let them spread out and rest more fully on the ground.

3. **After:** Write down the differences you notice in your body, emotions, and thoughts in the boxes below.

Thoughts	
Emotions	
Body	

(Continued on the next page)

© Pat Ogden. From Ogden, P., & Fisher, J. (2014). ***Sensorimotor psychotherapy: Interventions for trauma and attachment***. New York: W.W. Norton.

Grounding Yourself
GROUNDING RESOURCES, PART 2

Purpose: To practice grounding resources and discover ones that best help you to sense a connection with the ground.

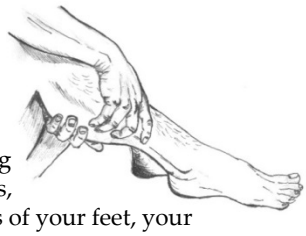
Directions: Follow the prompts below to discover what changes you notice after you try out the two grounding resources. Then use these resources when you feel ungrounded.

Massaging Your Legs & Feet

1. **Before:** Be mindful of your thoughts, emotions, and body and write down your experience of the building blocks below.

Thoughts	
Emotions	
Body	

2. Practice ***massaging your legs and feet***.



- Using your hands, squeeze and massage your legs and feet.
- Take your time trying different degrees of deep and light pressure, massaging each toe, in between your toes, the soles of your feet, the tops of your feet, your ankles, working your way up your calves, paying attention to your knees and thighs, then back down, ending with your feet.
- Focus all your attention on the sensations in your legs, and feet as you massage them.
- Feel the sensations on your skin and in the muscles underneath. Be curious!
- You might pretend you are discovering your legs and feet for the first time.

3. **After:** Write down the differences you notice in your body, emotions, and thoughts in the boxes below.

Thoughts	
Emotions	
Body	

Standing on Your Own Two Feet

1. **Before:** Be mindful of your thoughts, emotions, and body and write down your experience of the building blocks below.

Thoughts	
Emotions	
Body	

2. Practice ***standing on your own two feet.***



- Stand barefoot and position your feet so that they are under your shoulders.
- Notice if your feet are splayed outward, or if your toes are pointed inward.
- If it is comfortable for you, point your feet directly forward.
- Relax and soften your feet; slowly rock side to side, front to back, feeling the weight on different parts of your feet.
- Bend your knees slightly and then push against the ground with the soles of your feet to straighten your legs.
- Shift the weight from leg to leg, and then allow the weight to balance between them.
- Then stand still and sense or imagine the pull of gravity holding you to the ground.

3. **After:** Write down the differences you notice in your body, emotions, and thoughts in the boxes below.

Thoughts	
Emotions	
Body	

(Continued on the next page)

© Pat Ogden. From Ogden, P., & Fisher, J. (2014). ***Sensorimotor psychotherapy: Interventions for trauma and attachment***. New York: W.W. Norton.

CHAPTER 16

Grounding Yourself

GROUNDING RESOURCES, PART 3

Purpose: To practice grounding resources and discover ones that best help you to sense a connection with the ground.

Directions: Follow the prompts below to discover what changes you notice after you try out the two grounding resources. Then use these resources when you feel ungrounded.

Sit Bones

1. **Before:** Be mindful of your thoughts, emotions, and body and write down your experience of the building blocks below.

Thoughts	
Emotions	
Body	

2. Practice feeling your ***sit bones.***



- Sit on a hard chair with your feet flat on the floor and your feet and knees pointed forward, and sense your sit bones (the little bones at bottom of your pelvis that you sit on).
- Slowly rock forward and back, and side to side on your sit bones, feeling the pressure on different areas.
- Find a place of balance by sitting still and letting the weight of your body settle downward in front of your *sit bones*. Push gently upward with the top of your head.
- Sit tall and visualize small weights attached to each sit bone, exerting a downward pressure or pull toward the earth, feeling a sense of connection to the ground through your pelvic floor.

3. **After:** Write down the differences you notice in your body, emotions, and thoughts in the boxes below.

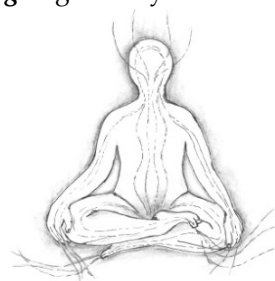
Thoughts	
Emotions	
Body	

Inhaling & Exhaling

1. **Before:** Be mindful of your thoughts, emotions, and body and write down your experience of the building blocks below.

Thoughts	
Emotions	
Body	

2. Practice ***inhaling and exhaling*** to ground yourself.



- Sit tall or stand up straight in a comfortable position.
- Breath naturally and notice your breath. Sense the soles of your feet.
- Then as you breathe in, imagine that you can draw your breath upward through the soles of your feet.
- As you breathe out, imagine sending your breath down your body, through your pelvis, legs and feet and into the ground.
- Imagine that your breath wraps around roots and rocks that are deep in the earth as you exhale.
- Repeat this breathing as often as you like, slowly inhaling the breath upward and exhaling downward through the bottom of your feet.

3. **After:** Write down the differences you notice in your body, emotions, and thoughts in the boxes below.

Thoughts	
Emotions	
Body	

© Pat Ogden. From Ogden, P., & Fisher, J. (2014). ***Sensorimotor psychotherapy: Interventions for trauma and attachment***. New York: W.W. Norton.

CHAPTER 16

Grounding Yourself
When You Felt Ungrounded

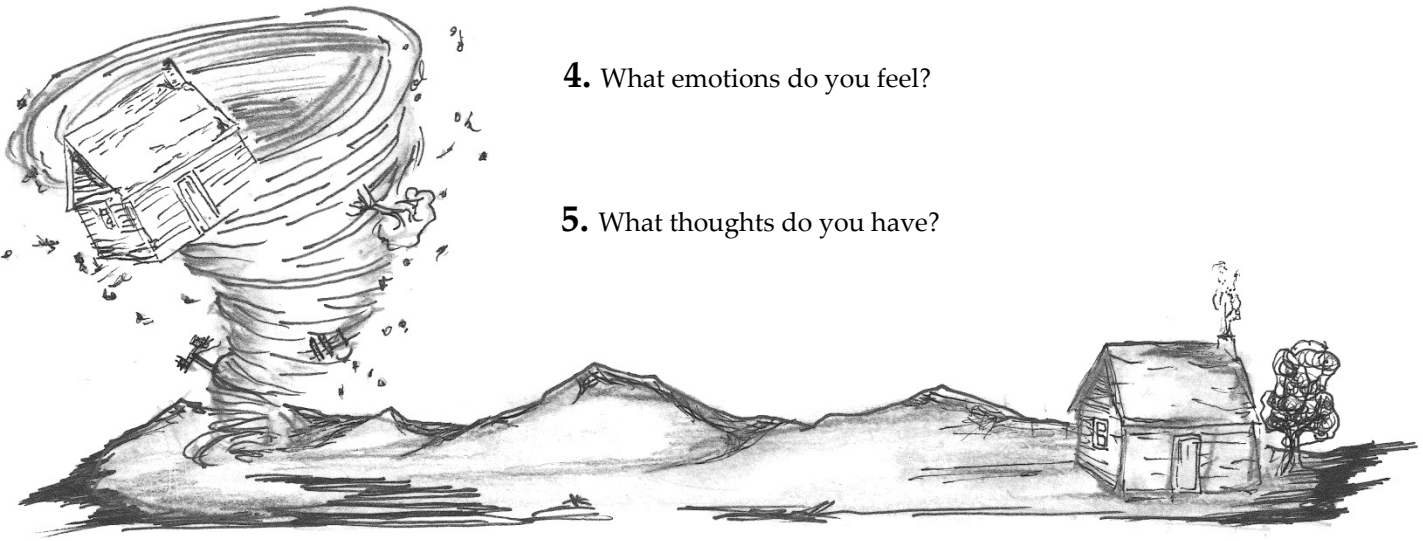
Purpose: To identify a situation that caused you to lose your ground, describe how you responded, and plan ahead to use a grounding resource the next time you experience a similar situation.

Directions: Think about a situation in which you felt ungrounded. Take your time to remember it, and be mindful of your internal experience. Then, answer the prompts below.

1. Describe what happened that made you feel ungrounded.
(e.g., *I briefly lost track of my 4-year-old in a store; I discovered my car was broken into; I saw a man who reminded me of the man who abused me; my husband was late to a special dinner I prepared; people laughed at me when I tried to play drums.*)

2. Describe your arousal level in that situation (e.g., high or hyperaroused; low or hypoaroused).

3. How do you feel in your body as you remember? (e.g., Tense, numb, spaced out, jittery, pulling away, head down, fragmented, or something else.)



4. What emotions do you feel?

5. What thoughts do you have?

6. Describe a grounding resource you could use to help you regulate your arousal.

7. Imagine the same situation, using your grounding resource.

8. Describe how your experience of the situations might have been different if you had used this grounding resource.

Thoughts **Emotions** **Arousal** **Sensation and Movements**

9. Identify three situations that you might face in the future in which this grounding resource could be helpful.

© Pat Ogden. From Ogden, P., & Fisher, J. (2014). ***Sensorimotor psychotherapy: Interventions for trauma and attachment***. New York: W.W. Norton.

Grounding Yourself

Regulating Arousal with Grounding Resources

Purpose: To explore grounding resources that can be used to regulate your arousal when it is high or hyperaroused and when it is low or hypoaroused.

Directions: Follow the prompts below to assess when your arousal begins to increase or decrease so that you can use a grounding resource before it rises above or falls below the edges of your window of tolerance.

Hyperarousal

High Arousal

1. Think about a situation or person that provokes unpleasant high or hyperarousal. Describe the high/hyperarousal trigger.

(e.g., *When I call my best friend on the phone and all she does is talk about herself; when a colleague at work interrupts me during meetings; when someone is mad at me; when I hear sirens.*)

2. Would you describe your arousal as high or is it hyperaroused? What bodily signals tell you so?

3. Which grounding resource works best for high or hyperarousal? Try using this resource during the above situation. What happens?

AROUSAL

4. Think about a situation or person that provokes unpleasant low or hypo-arousal. Describe the low/hypoarousal trigger.

(e.g, *When my partner shoots down my ideas; when I talk to my mom and she sounds depressed and complains about her health; when someone is mad at me; when I have to go to the doctor.*)

5. Would you describe your arousal as low or hypoaroused? What bodily signals tell you so?

6. Which grounding resource works best for low or hypoarousal? Try using this resource during the above situation. What happens?

Low Arousal

Hypoarousal

© Pat Ogden. From Ogden, P., & Fisher, J. (2014). ***Sensorimotor psychotherapy: Interventions for trauma and attachment***. New York: W.W. Norton.

CHAPTER 17

Core Alignment

Core Alignment and Posture, Part 1

Purpose: To explore various postures and contrast the emotional and physical effects of each posture, what message might be conveyed by each one, and which ones feel familiar or unfamiliar to you.

Directions: Study the postures below and then experiment with imitating each of them, noticing the differences. Then imitate each posture one at a time, and answer the questions in the space provided.

Posture #1

In this posture, the shoulders are rounded forward, the head and neck are forward, and the weight is on the ball of the foot.



How does your body feel?

What emotions do you experience?

How do you think others would react to you in this posture?

What message might be conveyed by this posture?

Does this posture feel familiar or remind you of anything?

Posture #2

In this posture, the knees are locked, the belly protrudes, the upper body leans back, the head comes forward, and each part of the body seems to be at an opposing angle.



How does your body feel?

What emotions do you experience?

How do you think others would react to you in this posture?

What message might be conveyed by this posture?

Does this posture feel familiar or remind you of anything?

Posture #3

In this posture, the tail bone is tucked under, the pelvis tilted, the low back flattened out, the knees are slightly bent, and the weight is toward the back of the foot.



How does your body feel?

What emotions do you experience?

How do you think others would react to you in this posture?

What message might be conveyed by this posture?

Does this posture feel familiar or remind you of anything?

Posture #4

In this posture, the weight is on the heels, the chest is collapsed, the head comes forward and the arms hang limply.



How does your body feel?

What emotions do you experience?

How do you think others would react to you in this posture?

What message might be conveyed by this posture?

Does this posture feel familiar or remind you of anything?

(Continued on the next page)

© Pat Ogden. From Ogden, P., & Fisher, J. (2014). ***Sensorimotor psychotherapy: Interventions for trauma and attachment***. New York: W.W. Norton.

CHAPTER 17

Core Alignment

Core Alignment and Posture, Part 2

Purpose: To explore various postures and contrast the emotional and physical effects of each posture, what message might be conveyed by each one, and which ones feel familiar or unfamiliar to you.

Directions: Study the postures below and then experiment with imitating each of them, noticing the differences. Then imitate each posture one at a time, and answer the questions in the space provided.

Posture #5

In this posture, the chest and the spine are collapsed, the knees are locked, the belly protrudes, the shoulders slump and the head droops a little.



How does your body feel?

What emotions do you experience?

How do you think others would react to you in this posture?

What message might be conveyed by this posture?

Does this posture feel familiar or remind you of anything?

Posture #6

In this posture, the chest is pushed out, the breastbone is lifted upward, the shoulders are held back, the chin is up, the spine is rigid, and the whole body is at attention.



How does your body feel?

What emotions do you experience?

How do you think others would react to you in this posture?

What message might be conveyed by this posture?

Does this posture feel familiar or remind you of anything?

Posture #7

In this posture, the muscles in the shoulders and neck are tense, pulling the shoulders forward and up, the neck and head are pulled into the shoulders, and the knees are locked.



How does your body feel?

What emotions do you experience?

How do you think others would react to you in this posture?

What message might be conveyed by this posture?

Does this posture feel familiar or remind you of anything?

Reflect on what you learned from these two worksheets on core alignment about your own posture and describe below.

What insight did you gain about another person you know whose posture is similar to one of these on the worksheets.

© Pat Ogden. From Ogden, P., & Fisher, J. (2014). ***Sensorimotor psychotherapy: Interventions for trauma and attachment***. New York: W.W. Norton.

CHAPTER 17

Core Alignment

Discovering Your Current Posture

Purpose: To discover qualities of your own posture and the message your posture might convey.

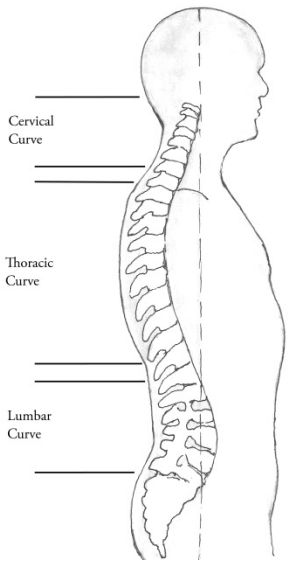
Directions: Stand as you would naturally and look in a mirror at your posture from the front and then the side, or have someone take front and side view pictures of you standing that you can look at.

1. Circle all of the descriptions below that apply to your posture, writing other postural elements you notice in the empty boxes, and then follow the rest of the prompts.

Head forward	Chin tilted downward	Shoulders held back	Curved lower back	Pelvis tilted under (tail between the legs)	Knees straight	Posture demonstrates three curves
Head erect	Chin forward	Shoulders level	Flat lower back	Knees locked	Knees or feet turned in	Shoulders, ears, hips, and ankles in line
Head tilted to one side	Shoulders rounded forward	Shoulders uneven (one higher)	Collapsed spine or chest	Knees or feet turned out	Abdomen protrudes	
Chin tilted upward	Shoulders hiked up	Back rounded forward	Stiff/rigid spine	Knees bent	Abdomen is flat	

2. Read the prompts in the boxes below, then exaggerate the elements of your posture that you circled: If your head comes forward a bit, bring it forward a little more. If your shoulders slump, slump them a little more. Stay in this exaggerated posture for a few minutes reflecting on the questions below. Then answer the questions.

Natural curves of the spine



How does your body feel?

What emotions seems related to your posture?

What impulses do you experience?

What message does your posture convey to you about yourself? What message might it convey to others?

3. Are the messages conveyed by your posture the ones you want to communicate? If not, what postural changes might help to communicate a different message?

© Pat Ogden. From Ogden, P., & Fisher, J. (2014). ***Sensorimotor psychotherapy: Interventions for trauma and attachment***. New York: W.W. Norton.

CHAPTER 17

Core Alignment

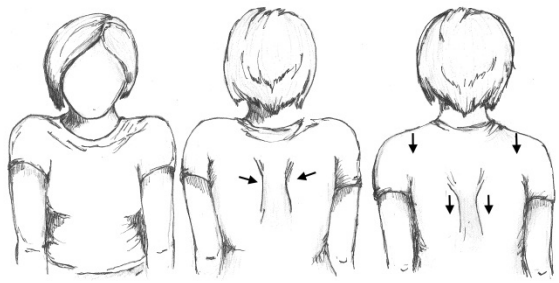
Exercises for Posture & Alignment

Purpose: To experiment with exercises that can support alignment and contrast a more aligned posture with your typical posture.

Directions: Follow the prompts below to practice exercises that support aligned posture.

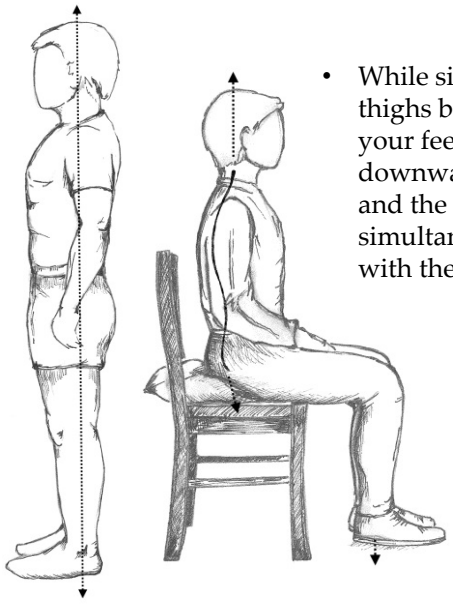
1. Shoulder roll:

- Shrug your shoulders up to your ears.
- Press your shoulders back and your shoulder blades together.
- Then slide your shoulder blades down your back.
- Do this a few times and notice how it affects your posture.



2. Lengthening your core:

- Stand with your feet under your shoulders and pointed forward (if comfortable).
- Keep your chin parallel to the floor.
- Visualize yourself gently being lifted up by the crown of your head while your feet are planted firmly on the ground.
- Experiment with gently extending the crown of your head upward toward the sky (while keeping your chin parallel to the floor) and gently pushing downward into the floor with your feet.



- While sitting with your feet and thighs both pointed forward and your feet flat on the floor, gently push downward with the tail of your spine and the soles of your feet and simultaneously gently push upward with the crown of your head.

3. Contrast the more aligned posture you experienced in the exercises above with your normal or familiar posture—go back and forth between them a few times. Describe the difference below.

My Familiar Posture	**A More Aligned Posture**
Thoughts I have:	Thoughts I have:
Emotions I feel:	Emotions I feel:
Movements and sensations I experience:	Movements and sensations I experience:

Remember to practice a more aligned posture!

© Pat Ogden. From Ogden, P., & Fisher, J. (2014). ***Sensorimotor psychotherapy: Interventions for trauma and attachment***. New York: W.W. Norton.

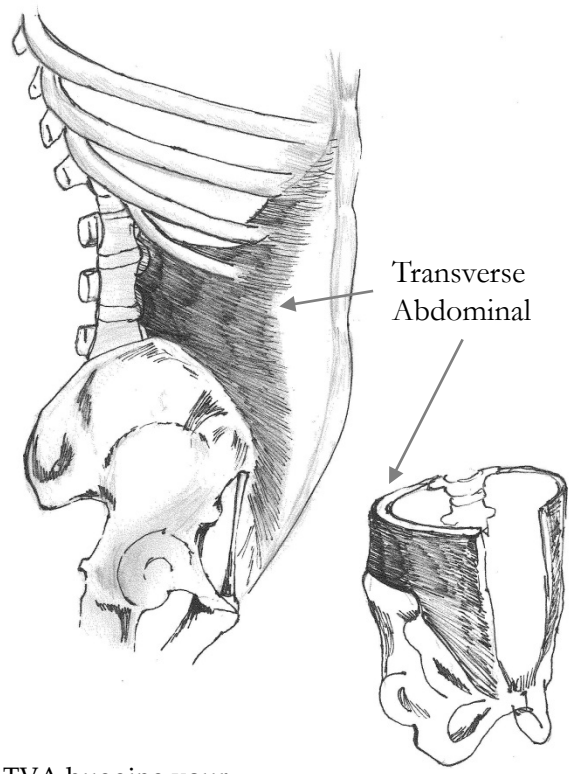
CHAPTER 17

Core Alignment

ENGAGING YOUR TVA MUSCLE

Purpose: To become aware of your transverse abdominal muscle, or TVA, the deep, flat muscle along the front and sides of your abdomen, and begin to strengthen it in order to help stabilize your core and support an aligned posture.

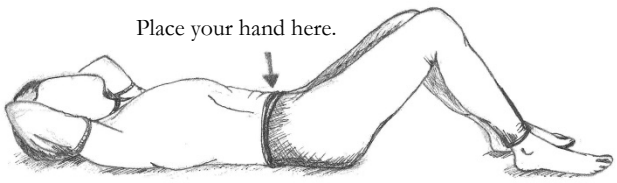
Directions: Experiment with the two exercises below, following the prompts, and report your findings at the bottom.



1. Sensing Your TVA

In order to strengthen your TVA, you must first sense the muscle. Look at the diagram of the TVA on the right to see where it is located in your body. Then complete the exercise below to sense your TVA before proceeding to the strengthening exercise.

1. Lie down on your back with your knees bent.
2. Place your hand on your belly, just below your navel.
3. With each exhale, feel your abdomen gently move away from your hand.
4. You might experience a hollowed-out feeling. Imagine your TVA hugging your spine, moving inward and upward. This is not a strong contraction, but very gentle and subtle. Try to relax the superficial abdominal muscles and sense the deeper TVA muscle instead.



2. Strengthening Your TVA

1. Stand or sit in an aligned posture and relax your body.
2. Place your hand on your belly, just below your navel.
3. As you exhale, very gently pull your belly button backward toward your spine, visualizing your TVA hugging your spine and also pulling slightly upward.
4. Hold that position for a few seconds and repeat several times.
5. Notice how this exercise affects your posture.

After practicing, describe your experience of sensing and strengthening your TVA. Include how your posture changes and how you feel about yourself. Don't be concerned if you do not feel a difference right away. Practicing this exercise will support a more aligned posture over time.

© Pat Ogden. From Ogden, P., & Fisher, J. (2014). ***Sensorimotor psychotherapy: Interventions for trauma and attachment***. New York: W.W. Norton.

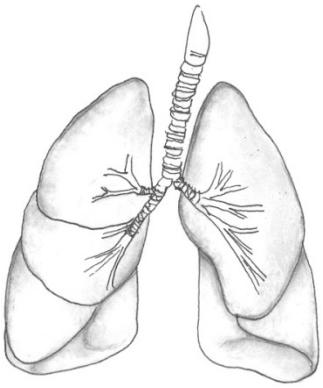
CHAPTER 18

Using Your Breath

Noticing Your Breath

Purpose: To practice mindfully observing your breath, without trying to change or evaluate it, in order to learn about your habitual way of breathing.

Directions: Find a comfortable position, sitting or lying down, and take your time to become mindful of your normal, resting breathing. Begin with the first circle below and follow the arrows.



1. First, describe how you are feeling right now.

2. What is your posture like? Are you sitting straight up? Slumping? Do you feel tightness in your neck and shoulders or anywhere else?

3. Take your time to sense how you are breathing. How would you describe your breathing right now? Fast or slow? Deep or shallow? Smooth or jerky? Regular or irregular?

4. Does your breathing feel comfortable, natural, and easy? Or does it feel strained, tense, or uncomfortable?

5. Which is longer, your inhale or your exhale? Or are they about the same?

6. Notice your ribs as you inhale. Do you feel them moving? Do they seem to be moving mostly in your upper chest? Do you sense their movement on the sides of your body or in the back of your body?

7. Describe if and how your way of breathing changed as you observed it.

8. What did you learn about your normal way of breathing? How do you feel after completing this exercise?

© Pat Ogden. From Ogden, P., & Fisher, J. (2014). ***Sensorimotor psychotherapy: Interventions for trauma and attachment***. New York: W.W. Norton.

CHAPTER 18

Using Your Breath
Posture, Tension, And Breath

Purpose: To discover how your posture and the tension in your body affect your breathing and to determine any physical patterns you want to change to support your breathing.

Directions: Explore the different exercises below. Start with #1 and follow the arrows.

1. Sit in a chair with a hard surface, or stand, and describe your way of breathing right now.

2. Describe your posture. Is your spine aligned? Slumped? Rigid or tense? Do you feel tension in your neck and shoulders, belly, or anywhere else in your body?

3. Try lengthening your spine, as you learned in Chapter 15. Gently push upward with the crown of your head, and downward into the earth with your feet. How does your breathing change?

4. Try making your shoulders a little tense. Hold that tension for a few moments and describe how your breathing changes. Then relax your shoulders and describe what changes in your breathing.

5. Try tensing your belly, just a little, and hold the tension for a few moments. What happens to your breathing? Let your belly relax and describe the difference.

6. Try breathing just in your upper chest. Then in just your belly. Then both. What differences do you feel?

7. Try letting your posture slump. Notice how your breathing changes. Contrast the slumped posture with a rigid, tense posture and describe the differences in your breathing.

8. Which way of holding your body feels familiar to you? Tight shoulders, tight belly, slumped, rigid, or aligned posture? Do you notice any physical habit you might want to change to support your breathing?

© Pat Ogden. From Ogden, P., & Fisher, J. (2014). ***Sensorimotor psychotherapy: Interventions for trauma and attachment***. New York: W.W. Norton.

CHAPTER 18

Using Your Breath

Different Ways of Breathing

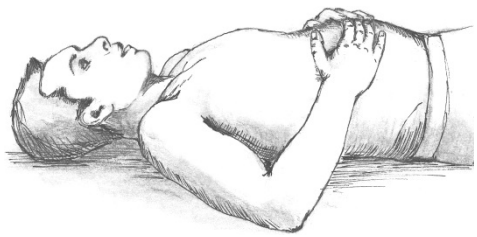
Purpose: To become aware of the way you breathe, explore a few different ways of breathing, and notice how they affect your experience.

Directions: Follow the prompts below to notice your way of breathing, then practice each of the five different exercises below and notice the difference. If at any time you feel uncomfortable, discontinue the exercise.

1. Notice your normal breathing right now. Circle all the words in the chart below that describe it. Write in additional descriptors in the empty boxes.

held breath	steady	tight
shallow	heavy, sighing	deep
labored	fast	slow
struggled	irregular	winded
through the nose	through the mouth	ribs move/don't move
mostly in the belly	longer inhale than exhale	longer exhale than inhale
mostly in the chest		

2. Try taking tiny sips of breath. Notice what happens—does this way of breathing feel resourcing to you or not? Describe your experience.



3. Sitting or lying down, place your hands on your belly. As you inhale, let your belly push out against your hands. Maybe you can sense your ribs lifting upward and your chest cavity expanding with each inhale. Describe your experience.



4. Place your hands on the sides of your ribcage, with your fingers reaching around the front of your body. As you inhale, see try to sense your hands moving apart, and as you exhale, sense your hands coming closer together. Describe your experience.

5. How do you feel when you emphasize your inhale, letting it be a little bit longer than your exhale? Try it for a few minutes. Is your arousal affected? What do you experience?

6. As you exhale, imagine just letting the air fall out of the body without effort, allowing gravity to do the work. Try it for a few minutes, allowing your exhale to be a little bit longer than your inhale. Is your arousal affected? What do you experience?

7. Which way of breathing feels natural to you? Which feels good or resourcing? Which way of breathing might you use in the future as a resource to alter your arousal or mood?

© Pat Ogden. From Ogden, P., & Fisher, J. (2014). ***Sensorimotor psychotherapy: Interventions for trauma and attachment***. New York: W.W. Norton.

CHAPTER 18

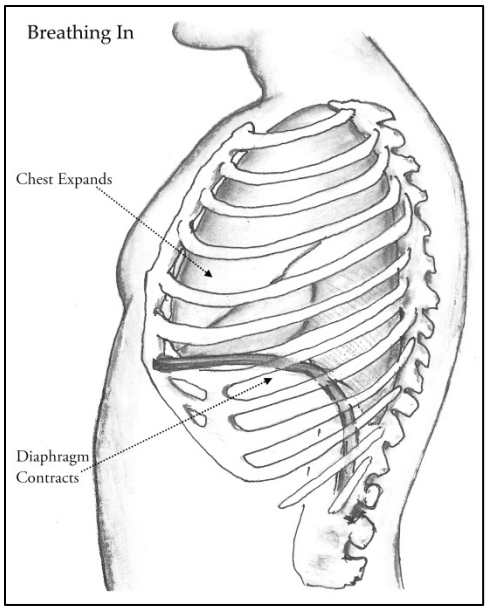
Using Your Breath

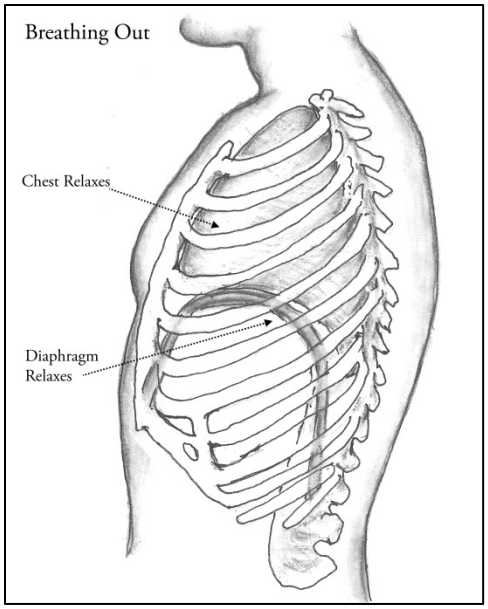
Developing a Resource in Breathing

Purpose: To notice and reflect on times when your breathing felt good to you (maybe it felt regulating, energizing, or calming), and practice using that way of breathing as a resource.

Directions: Be aware of your breathing and notice times during the day when your breathing feels good to you—maybe it feels better when your breathing is deep, smooth, easy, and regular, or when you are not breathing so deeply. You might also remember some moments in your past when your breathing felt good. Then follow the prompts below.

1. Describe the moments, situations, or people you were with when your breathing felt good to you, and what felt good about the way you were breathing. (e.g., *I noticed I took long, deep breaths as I was snuggling with my wife before I fell asleep; when I was sitting out on my deck in the sun with a cup of coffee, my breathing felt full and steady; when I was working out, I took deep breaths that expanded my chest.*)





2. What did you feel in your body? Did your emotions or thoughts change? What was the effect of breathing in this way? (e.g., *When I was working out, I felt a strength in my body, felt my ribs expand in the back of my body. I felt energized and alert. Emotionally, I felt good and I had thoughts that I was doing something good for myself.*)

3. When might you use this way of breathing as resource in the future? (e.g., *When I get anxious, I can try taking deep, full breaths instead of short, shallow ones, and I can be aware of my ribs expanding in the back of my body.*)

© Pat Ogden. From Ogden, P., & Fisher, J. (2014). ***Sensorimotor psychotherapy: Interventions for trauma and attachment***. New York: W.W. Norton.

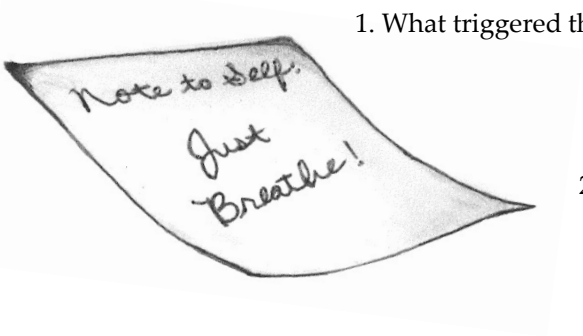
CHAPTER 18

Using Your Breath

Regulating Your Arousal or Mood with Your Breath

Purpose: To notice situations in which your breathing did not feel good to you, discover how it relates to your arousal, and try out a different way of breathing.

Directions: Notice your breathing during the week and identify a time when you experienced a change in your breathing that did not feel good (e.g., felt too fast or slow, deep or shallow, irregular or jerky). Or recall a recent upsetting memory, thought, or trigger that altered your breathing in a way that did not feel good. Then follow the prompts below.



1. What triggered the changes in your breathing that did not feel good?

2. What was it about your breathing that did not feel good?

3. How did your breathing relate to your arousal? Was your arousal high, or hyperaroused, or low, or hypoaroused?

Hyperaroused

Hypoaroused

4. For a moment, try on the way of breathing that did not feel good and write down the effects.

5. Describe a different way of breathing you could use as a resource.

6. Try on the different way of breathing. Describe the effect here.

7. In what situations, or with which people, might you want to remember to use the different way of breathing?

© Pat Ogden. From Ogden, P., & Fisher, J. (2014). ***Sensorimotor psychotherapy: Interventions for trauma and attachment***. New York: W.W. Norton.