



HealthyBodyHealthyLife
with *Melissa Koerner*

BONUS
Stress Busting Tool Kit



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| REFRAMING EXERCISES

The following exercises are from the highly acclaimed book *Adrenal Fatigue*, by James L. Wilson

Turning Lemons into Lemonade

Step 1: For one week write down your self-talk (things you say only to yourself.) Pay close attention to the negative messages you say to yourself when you get upset. For example, a woman might say “I’m fat, ugly and have no will power.” Write your thoughts in a small notebook.

Step 2: After one week, review your list and tally how many negative thoughts you said to yourself. This will give you a sense of how much energy you’re putting into making yourself feel bad. Count how many times you gave yourself a specific message (for example, “I’m fat” 12 times.) Write to totals next to each message. Using the totals rank the messages from most frequent to least frequent. This will help you target what you’re feeling most stressed about. In our example, a woman who tells herself she’s “fat,” “ugly” and has “no will power” when she eats cookies, has a difficult relationship with food and her body image.

Step 3: Next to the negative message write the opposite in positive terms. For example, if a woman tells herself that she’s “fat,” “ugly” and has “no will power,” she would write “lean,” “beautiful” and “strong” next to them respectively. Look at the top five messages in your positive list and visualize how your life would be different if those things were true. What would have that you don’t currently have? In our example, when this woman thinks about being slim, beautiful and having strong will power, she realizes that these things would make her feel more in control in her life and more respected by others. What she really wants is to feel empowered, respected, and loved, but she was focusing on her appearance and eat habits instead.

Step 4: Look at how you can reframe the problem areas in your life to help you get what you want instead of more of what you don’t. In our example, after writing down what she wants this woman may decide the best place to start is to get respect and love through her relationship with food since this is the most difficult area in her life. She may begin to see her body as like a child depending on her for care rather than an out of control person. When she notices she has a craving for unhealthy foods, she recognizes that her body is sending her a signal that she should listen to much like a child crying.

Step 5: When you have reframed the difficult situation you can see everything that happens in that situation through the lens of your new positive perspective. So in our example, instead of this woman simply trying to suppress her cravings, she looked at her cravings as an opportunity to learn more about herself and her true needs. Maybe she needs better nourishment, maybe she needs exercise, maybe she needs rest, maybe she needs to speak her mind about something, maybe just needs to take a few deep breaths to relax. She is using her food cravings to *help* her rather than *hinder* her from getting what she wants, and her relationship with food improves as a result. By reframing her perspective about her body, she’s transforming her relationship with foods into an opportunity to give herself what she really wants rather than a reason for not getting what she really wants.



Up in Smoke

This exercise is meant to help you let go of a belief or thought that has been holding you back and weighing you down. You need a pencil, a small piece of paper, matches and a fireproof container. On the piece of paper write down in a few words as possible a source of unhappiness that is nagging you right now. It can be a problem, a regret, a false belief about yourself, or one thing you believe needs to happen before you can be happy right now. Hold the thought in your mind and allow your true feelings to arise. Then hold the paper over a match and drop it into the container letting it burn completely. Take a deep breath, and then exhale slowly allowing the unhappy thought to exhale out of your body.

| MENTAL PICTURE EXERCISES

How to Prepare for the Mental Picture Exercises:

Sit comfortably in a chair or lie down on your back. Allow all of your muscles to relax. Let your forehead, jaw, hands, arms, shoulders and legs relax. For about 5 minutes sit without paying attention to your muscles. The next step is to use “goal pictures” in your imagination to realize your goals.

The following exercises are from the highly acclaimed book “Psycho-Cybernetics” by Maxwell Maltz

Exercise #1

Picture yourself lying stretched out across your bed. Picture your legs as if they are made of concrete. See your legs sinking into the mattress. Now picture your arms and legs made of concrete sinking into the mattress. Picture someone you trust trying to lift your feet, then your hands—but they are unable to because your arms and legs are too heavy. Continue picturing your arms, hands and feet sinking into the bed and being too heavy to lift for a total of 10-30 minutes.

Exercise #2

Picture yourself lying stretched out across your bed. Picture your body consisting of a series of inflated rubber balloons. Picture two valves open at the bottom of your feet releasing air until your legs are two flat, deflated rubber tubes. Picture a valve open in the center of your chest releasing air until your chest is fully deflated and resting against the bed. Continue in this fashion with your arms, head and neck for a total of 10-30 minutes.

Exercise #3

This one is my personal favorite. I like to do it when I lie down to go to sleep at night. Think about a pleasant memory from your past. Picture a time when you felt totally relaxed, peaceful, at ease. For example, it could be a memory from a vacation to the mountains or the beach. Recall as many details as you can about the environment. What did you see? What did you hear? What did you feel? What did you smell? What did you taste? Continue in this fashion total of 10-30 minutes.



| BREATHING EXERCISES

Alternate-Nostril Breathing

This exercise lowers your pulse, reduces your blood pressure, raises the efficiency of your breathing, and raises your ability to solve problems. Yogis have been performing it for thousands of years. It's only recently that Westerners have learned that breathing only through the right nostril activates the sympathetic nervous system ("fight or flight") and left hemisphere of the brain, and that only breathing through the left nostril activates the parasympathetic nervous system (the relaxation response) and right hemisphere of the brain.

Here's how you do it:

Sit on the floor and cover one nostril while breathing through the other. Cover your right nostril with your right thumb, and inhale through your left nostril while counting slowly to ten. Then hold your breath for a count of ten. Notice the sensations in your lower lungs and soft belly, particularly as you reach the higher numbers. Sit up straight, but keep your core soft. Move your right ring finger to cover your left nostril, release your thumb to uncover your right nostril, and exhale through your right nostril for a slow count to ten. Then inhale through your right nostril, and hold for a count to ten. Is the movement of air through the right nostril as smooth as it was through the left? Move your thumb back to cover your right nostril and exhale through your left. Repeat for three more rounds. Do this any time you feel the need to relax.

Diaphragmatic Breathing

Diaphragmatic breathing, used in yoga, meditation, and tai chi, entails bringing air deeply into your lower and upper lungs. The relaxing and therapeutic form of breathing is also called abdominal breathing and has been shown to lower stress and cortisol and to raise melatonin. Take a deep breathe, through the nose. When we breathe shallowly all day, similar to a rabbit, emergency "sensors" alert the body that we're under attack and need a constant flow of adrenaline and cortisol. Instead, when you breathe into the lower lobes of the lungs, calming sensors tell your body to settle down. Breathing through the nose, slowly and deeply, is especially effective in triggering the calm response.

Chanting

You can light up your memory and reduce the feeling of always being on edge by a simple chant, such as OM, pronounced ah-ohhh-ummm. Start with a deep inhalation, and chant on the exhale. Repeat slowly, synched with your breath.



| EMOTIONAL FREEDOM TECHNIQUES (EFT)

EFT, also known as “tapping”, is an energy psychology tool that can help reprogram your body’s reactions to every day stress, thereby reducing your chances of developing negative health effects. It’s based on the concept that vital energy flows through your body along with invisible pathways known as “meridians.” EFT stimulates different energy meridians in your body by tapping them with your fingertips, while simultaneously saying verbal affirmations. EFT helps you reprogram the way your body responds to emotional stressors, and since many emotional stressors are connected to physical health problems, often illness and diseases can disappear. To Learn more and see an EFT demonstration, watch the BB50 Women’s Health Summit interview called *The Tapping Solution: Using Tapping to Overcome Physical, Mental and Emotional Pain* with EFT Practitioner Julie Schiffman. (You can find the BB50 Women’s Health Summit in your BB50 portal under the folder labeled “03. Summits and Workshops.”)

| RELAXATION RESPONSE EXERCISES

The Relaxation Response

Based on meditation, the relaxation response is a counter to the fight-or-flight response, moving the body from a state of physiological arousal (increased heart rate, blood pressure, and stress hormones) to physiological relaxation, which is your ideal normal state. Practicing the relaxation response involves sitting quietly for ten to twenty minutes at a time and paying attention to your breath. When the inevitable thoughts arise, practice just letting them go. If you can’t make yourself sit still, you can try listening to calming music, which also lowers cortisol. (Pandora or AccuRadio are free online radio resources).

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

A similar technique to the relaxation response progressive muscle relaxation is when you focus on a single body part and try to relax it. This is a good exercise if you have a lot of stress related aches and pains and you have a hard time relaxing.

Here’s how you do it:

Lie down on your back. Take a few slow, deep breaths to help your relax. Then, tighten the muscles in your toes as tight as you can, hold for 10 seconds and relax your toes. Next, tighten the muscles in your feet as tight as you can, hold for 10 seconds and relax your feet. Continue in this fashion until every part of your body has been tighten then relaxed (you calves, knees, thighs, butt, hips, abdomen, back, chest, hands, shoulders, upper back, neck, face and scalp.) After going through every part of your body, feel a sense of relaxation come over you every time you inhale and letting go of all tension every time you exhale. After a few minutes of this, just rest your body and breath slowly.

Cultivate Presence, and Release Clenched Muscles

Getting into the present moment is your ticket to normalizing cortisol. Most women unconsciously grip their muscles, whether in the jaw, neck, shoulders, or lower back. Focus on observing your muscles to induce a relaxed state, releasing your tension.



| PHYSICAL EXERCISES

Gentle Yoga

Yoga lowers cortisol in women with breast cancer and lowers blood sugar in healthy people. Other studies confirm that yoga lowers blood pressure in healthy college kids and people with heart disease, as well as women with cancer.

Corpse pose (Savasana)

The final pose of a yoga practice, called Savasana in Sanskrit, which means “corpse pose.” This exercise integrates the key stress-relieving practices. While lying flat on your back close your eyes, breathe deeply, clear your mind and observe the subtle shifts of energy in your body.

Invert

Any time you put your feet above the level of your heart, even with your legs straight up against the wall, you activate your *parasympathetic nervous system*, which is the rest-and-digest counterbalance to *fight or flight* (or “tend and befriend in women”) of the *sympathetic nervous system*.



| MEDITATION

Here's some of the benefits of meditation:

- Improved sense of awareness
- Improved mental clarity
- Improved energy
- Improved athletic ability
- Disappearance of chronic ailments
- Tighter, younger skin
- Brighter eyes
- Increased ability to sense other peoples' feelings and thoughts

There are countless forms of meditation. Below are a few of my favorites.

Seated Meditation with Mantra

You can do this meditation at the beginning of your day and before bedtime. Find a relaxed seated position, either in a chair or crossed legged on a cushion. Keep your spine straight and your head up. Your hips should be higher than your knees if you have crossed your legs. If they are not, place a small cushion under your hips and support your knees with towel rolls or small pillows. Find your breath. Feel it below your nostrils as you inhale. It's cool. Feel it as you exhale. It's warmed by your body. Focus on your breath until you feel settled and grounded. Now with each inhale think the word "SO". With each exhale think the word "HUM." Continue this for several minutes until your thoughts are no longer a factor and you are solely focused on your mantra; SO HUM. Do this for 15-20 minutes. For the next 10 minutes go through every single thing you have to be grateful for. You can write these down in a gratitude journal. Don't forget your teeth, your bed, your feet, your clothes, your ears, your heart, etc... At night before bed take those last 10 minutes and forgive yourself for any hurt you have allowed yourself to take on from another's actions, forgive the person for hurting you, and forgive yourself for any hurt you have caused others. Surround yourself in a crystal cocoon and go to sleep.

Standing Meditation

Start by standing with good posture—your knees should be unlocked, your feet should be about hips width apart and parallel, and your spine should be lengthened, standing as tall as you comfortably can. Gently draw your belly button toward spine, tuck your chin slightly, and relax your shoulders and arms. (Your shoulders should roll back slightly.) In the correct position your ear, shoulder, hip, knee and ankle should line up from the side view. Let your tongue rest on roof of mouth behind front teeth. (Keep it relaxed at all times). This positioning allows for the optimal flow of energy called "Chi." From a standing position, you can perform the exercise in several ways: You can let your arms hang at your sides completely relaxed. Or you can pretend that you're holding a soap bubble ("chi bubble") about size of a basketball right in front of lower abdominals. You can feel and imagine the chi bubble being half in and half out of your body. You can change the size & location of the Chi bubble—you can move it up and down your body, wherever it feels right. Remember to focus on the bubble being half in and half out.



Seated Meditation

If you get tired while standing, you can sit and continue the meditation. Make sure you continue to sit tall and keep your body aligned. Start with 10 minutes and work your way up to 30 minutes of doing nothing every day. 60 minutes is a bonus!

Walking Meditation

Walking meditation is a way to take time out for self, away from people and technology and give yourself a break from the stressors of everyday life. As you walk, time your breath with your steps. For example, inhale for four steps, hold for one step, and exhale for four steps. It's a good idea to count your steps until you've mastered the process. This allows you to empty your mind of daily stressors and just focus on your steps and breathing. Start with at least 15 minutes. It's best performed in nature because you can benefit from the Earth's energies.

Here's A Few Meditation Tips:

1. Pay attention to your breathing:

- Breath in through nose and exhale through your nose or mouth.
- Your breath should be deep, slow, rhythmic and relaxed—it should never feel forced.
- Belly expands as breath in

2. Observe your thoughts:

- While doing nothing your mind will wander and think about daily stressors.
- Observe your mind each time it wanders. Grab it and pull it back to a quiet place.
- If you have a jumpy mind, count your breaths; this gives you something non-stressful to focus on.



| REST PERIODS

There are three kinds of rest.

Total Rest

Total rest is complete removal from stressful environments. Examples include deep, restful sleep, a day off from work or a vacation. Total rest is absolutely necessary for your body to recover and repair itself from every day wear and tear.

Active Rest

Active rest is a reduction in work load. You're setting fewer goals during day—goals that require less energy. You're still working and achieving your goals, but you're not working so intensively. For example, you could clean out filing cabinets or organizing your office. Active rest periods make you more efficient because you're giving your mind a chance to re-energize. You'll go back 100% more focused and thinking more clearly and efficiently.

Passive Rest

Passive rest periods are short-term breaks from work tasks or projects. You step away and pull your mind away from work. This creates space in your mind to re-energize and re-focus. Examples include: Listening to music, walking, reading, meditating etc. Anything that that takes your mind *completely* away from what you're working on.