

# Self-Care and De-Stress Tips

## Resilience In Your Student Experience (RISE Center)

### ABDOMINAL BREATHING

One group of muscles that commonly tense in response to stress are those located in the wall of your abdomen. When your abdominal muscles are tight, they push against your diaphragm as it extends downward to initiate each breath. This pushing action restricts the amount of air you take in and forces the air you do inhale to remain high in the top part of your lungs. Abdominal breathing reverses this process by relaxing the muscles that press against your diaphragm and slowing your breath rate.

- 1. Lie down and close your eyes.** Take a moment to notice the sensations in your body, particularly where your body is holding any tension. Take several breaths and see what you notice about the quality of your breathing. Where is your breath centered? Are your lungs filling all the way up? Does your chest move in and out when you breathe? Does your abdomen? Do both?
- 2. Place one hand on your chest and the other one on your abdomen, right below your waist.** As you breathe in, imagine that you are sending your breath as far down into your body as it will go. Feel your lungs expand as they fill up with air. As you do this, the hand on your chest should remain fairly still, but the hand on your abdomen should rise and fall with each breath.
- 3. Continue to gently breathe in and out.** Let your breath find its own pace. If your breathing feels unnatural or forced in any way, just maintain your awareness of that sensation as you breathe in and out. Eventually any straining or unnaturalness should ease up by itself.
  - a. If you are having difficulty getting the hand on your abdomen to move, or if both hands are moving, try pressing down with the hand on your abdomen. As you breathe, direct the air so that it pushes up against the pressure of your hand, forcing it to rise.
- 4. After breathing deeply for several breaths, begin to count each time you exhale.** After ten exhalations, start the count over with one. When thoughts intrude and you lose track of the number you are on, simply return your attention to the exercise and start counting again from number one. Continue counting your breaths for ten minutes, ensuring that the hand on your abdomen continues to rise with each breath.

Excerpted and adapted from Thoughts and Feelings, Taking Control of Your Moods and Your Life by Matthew McKay, Ph.D., Martha Davis, Ph.D., & Patrick Fanning (New Harbinger Publications, INC., 1997)

### The UCLA Mindful Awareness Research Center

Mindful awareness can be defined as paying attention to present moment experiences with openness, curiosity, and a willingness to be with what is. It is an excellent antidote to the stresses of modern times. It invites us to stop, breathe, observe, and connect with one's inner experience. There are many ways to bring mindfulness into one's life, such as meditation, yoga, art, or time in nature.

In the last ten years, significant research has shown mindfulness to address health issues such as lower blood pressure and boost the immune system; increase attention and focus, including aid those suffering from ADHD; help with difficult mental states such as anxiety and depression, fostering well-being and less emotional reactivity; and thicken the brain in areas in charge of decision making, emotional flexibility, and empathy.

- Offers classes and workshops to the general public (usually free for UCLA Students)
- Provides free guided meditations, weekly podcasts, and other mindfulness tools

<https://www.uclahealth.org/marc/>

### 30+ Ways To De-Stress In Less Than 10 Minutes

- Listen to your favorite tunes
- Head outside
- Stretch
- Meditate
- Read for pleasure
- Walk, bike, skateboard around the block
- Count to 10
- Dance
- Journal
- Write down 10 things you are grateful for
- Doodle or draw
- Tell some jokes
- Call a friend
- Chew a piece of gum
- Focus & notice your present surroundings (Grounding)
- Disconnect from tech
- Look at a happy photo
- Squeeze a stress ball
- Watch a funny youtube video
- Punch a pillow
- Deep, slow breathing
- Read an inspirational quote
- Spend time with a pet
- Practice yoga poses
- Do 20 jumping jacks
- Do something nice for someone
- Sit in the sun
- Visualize a safe comforting place
- Pick some flowers
- Give yourself a neck massage
- Take a shower
- Kick a soccer ball

[www.SharonMartinCounseling.com](http://www.SharonMartinCounseling.com)

### Visit the RISE CENTER

Located in Lu Valle Commons, Rm B-01

Resilience In your Student Experience (RISE), is an affiliate program and physical extension of Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS). RISE serves as CAPS' holistic wellness hub and provides an array of programs, classes, trainings, and self-directed resources to foster and support resilience, connection, and well-being.

#### What does RISE offer?

- A wellness oasis on campus to re-charge, relax, & restore
- Resilience-related resources
- Mental Health and Well-being Trainings & Workshops
- Consultation and Outreach for the Campus Community
- One-on-one assessments of student wellness needs with Resilience Educators
- Healing Programs
  - Trauma-Informed Yoga
  - Mindfulness Workshops & Groups
  - GRIT Peer Coaching
  - Drop-in and Self-help Support

### Counseling & Psychological Services

John Wooden Center West

221 Westwood Plaza, Los Angeles, CA 90095

Hours: Mon-Thurs: 8am-6pm, Fri. 8am-5pm (By appointment only after 4pm)

Brief Screen Hours: Mon-Thurs: 9am-4pm, Fri. 9am-3pm

Phone #: 310-825-0768

(After-hours crisis counseling available by phone)

# Self Soothing Techniques

## UTILIZING EACH OF YOUR 5 SENSES

Excerpted and adapted from DBT Skills Training Handouts and Worksheets, Second Ed. by Marsha M. Linehan. © 2015 by Marsha M. Linehan.

### SMELL

- Use your favorite soap, shampoo, aftershave, cologne, or lotions, or try them on in the store
- Open a package of coffee and inhale the aroma
- Put potpourri or eucalyptus oil in a bowl in your room
- Boil cinnamon
- Make cookies, bread, or popcorn
- Smell the roses
- Open the window and smell the air
- Walk in a wooded area and mindfully breathe in the fresh smells of nature

### VISION

- Look at the stars at night
- Look at pictures you like in a book
- Buy one beautiful flower
- Make one space in a room pleasing to look at
- Watch a sunrise or sunset
- Go to a museum or poster shop with beautiful art
- Look at nature around you
- Be mindful of each sight that passes in front of you
- Go to a dance performance or watch it on TV

### TASTE

- Eat some of your favorite foods
- Drink your favorite soothing drink, such as herbal tea, hot chocolate, a latte, or a smoothie
- Suck on a piece of peppermint candy
- Really taste the food you eat. Eat one thing mindfully
- Get a little bit of a special food you don't usually spend the money on, like fresh-squeezed orange juice or your favorite candy
- Sample flavors in an ice cream store
- Eat a comfort food from home or childhood

### HEARING

- Listen to soothing or invigorating music
- Pay attention to the sounds of nature (waves, birds, rainfall, leaves rustling)
- Pay attention to the sounds of the city (traffic, horns, city music)
- Learn to play an instrument
- Make a playlist that will get you through the tough times.
- Be mindful of any sounds that come your way, letting them go in one ear and out the other

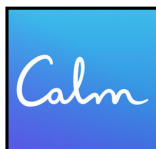
### TOUCH

- Take a long hot bath or shower
- Pet your dog or cat
- Have a massage
- Soak your feet
- Wrap up in a blanket
- Take a drive with the car windows rolled down
- Hug someone
- Notice touch that is soothing
- Sink into a comfortable chair in your home
- Put a creamy lotion on your whole body
- Put a cold compress on your forehead
- Put on a blouse or shirt that has a pleasant feel
- Put clean sheets on the bed

## Apps to Try:



UCLA Mindful

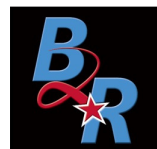


Calm



Headspace

\*Discount for UCLA students



Breathe 2 Relax



Pacifica



Moodkit

None of these apps have been reviewed by RISE and are not endorsed by UCLA.