

Mindful Movement for Emotion
Regulation throughout the Day



What is emotional self-regulation?

Emotional self-regulation is the ability to understand and manage your behavior and your reactions to feelings and things happening around you.

It includes being able to:

- regulate reactions to strong emotions like frustration, excitement, anger and embarrassment
- calm down after something exciting or upsetting
- focus on a task
- refocus attention on a new task
- control impulses
- behave in ways that help you get along with other people

Self-regulation involves taking a pause between a feeling and an action — and giving yourself that time and space to regulate with rhythm and repetition. By engaging in skills such as focused breathing and movement, mindfulness enables us to put some space between ourselves and our reactions, leading to better focus and feelings of calmness and relaxation. With mindfulness tools, you are better able to *respond* and not *react* to stressful moments.

Self-regulation is one of the five elements of emotional intelligence, a concept developed by psychologist Daniel Goleman, and it helps us stop unhelpful behavior, and keep calm under pressure.

The first step to practicing self-regulation is to develop the mindset that you can adapt tools and strategies to give you a choice in how you react to situations. We invite you to use these tools to regulate yourself:

- Recognize that in every situation you have three options: approach, avoidance, and attack. While it may feel as though your choice of behavior is out of your control, if you are able to create space between your feelings and yourself, you can choose how you would like to respond.
- Become aware of your emotions. Do you feel like running away from a difficult situation? Do you feel like lashing out in anger? Name the emotion.
- Monitor your body to get clues about how you are feeling if it is not immediately obvious to you. For example, a rapidly increasing heart rate may be a sign that you are feeling strong emotions or even experiencing a panic attack.

We invite you to use the following sequence to support yourself: regulate, relate, reason.

Regulate: Move with rhythm and repetition

Relate: Label your thoughts or emotions. Create space between yourself and your emotions.

Reason: Reflect on what happened, what can you learn about yourself? What inner dialogue can you develop? What goals can you set?

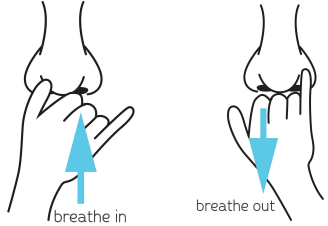
How do you currently self-regulate?

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Mindful Tool : **Belly Breath**

<p>Benefits</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Saves energy ● Improve focus ● Clears mind ● Lowers stress ● Increase oxygen and carbon dioxide exchange
<p>Instructions</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sit up tall, and check your posture. 2. Pull your imaginary string on the top of your head to align your back, neck, and spine. 3. Place two hands on your belly and look down, in front of you, or close your eyes. 4. Breathe in through your nose, filling up your lungs with air. Make your belly big like a balloon. 5. Breathe out, slowly releasing all the air from your lungs, and making your belly flat like a pancake. <p style="text-align: center;"><i>[Lead students in 10 belly breaths.]</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Inhale-breathe in- through your nose (fill up your lungs with air), exhale-breathe out- through your nose (let air out through nose). 7. Breathe in...breathe out. <p style="text-align: center;"><i>[Repeat nine times until all students have taken 10 belly breaths.]</i></p>
<p>Questions to Ask</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What am I feeling now? (name emotion) ● What physical sensations do I feel? ● What am I thinking?

Mindful Tool : **Alternate Nostril Breath**

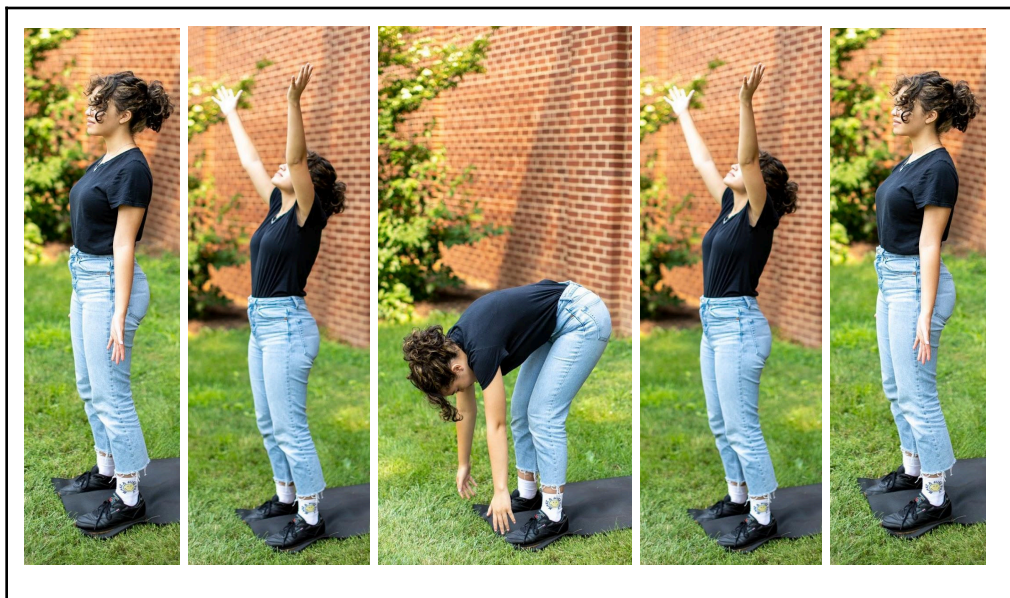
<p>Benefits</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Get to a place of calmness and relaxation ● Clean the blood system of toxins
<p>Instructions</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sit up tall to prepare for Alternate Nostril Breath. Remember that today as we breathe, we are going to follow these steps as we notice our thoughts: 1.) Notice a thought; 2) Accept the thought by saying to yourself “I notice I’m thinking ____ and that’s OK.”; 3) Refocus back on your breathing. 2. Let’s begin. Take your right hand and make a fist and then stick out your pinky and your thumb making a ‘surfer dude’ hand. Turn your palm to face you. Now use your thumb to press your right nostril closed and take a full breath in through your open left nostril. Pause. Use your pinky to press your left nostril closed and release your thumb, opening your right nostril. Breathe out slowly through your right nostril. Take a full breath in through your open right nostril. Pause. Use your thumb to press your right nostril closed and release your pinky, opening your left nostril. Breathe out slowly through your left nostril. Repeat this for a few more rounds on your own. If you want, you can close your eyes to help you focus on your breath. <p><i>[Students complete rounds of Alternate Nostril Breath. If students lose focus, remind them of step 1 above]</i></p> <p>Now shift your awareness back to the room and open your eyes if they are closed.</p>
<p>Image</p>	
<p>Questions to Ask</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What am I feeling now? (name emotion) ● What physical sensations do I feel? ● What am I thinking?

Mindful Tool: Seated Stretches

<p>Benefits</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increases oxygen and carbon dioxide exchange ● Regulates heart rate ● Relieves tension in neck, shoulders, and back.
<p>Instructions</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Neck Stretches: Sit up tall and align your spine. Drop your right ear towards your right shoulder, stretching the left side of your neck. Hold here for two breaths . Now switch sides, releasing your left ear towards your left shoulder, stretching the right side of your neck. Hold here for two breaths and notice any sensations. Breathe in and bring your head and neck back through the center. Breathe out and drop your right ear towards your right shoulder again. As you breathe in, roll your neck forward, tucking your chin in to your chest. Breathe out and roll your neck to the left reaching your left ear towards your left shoulder. Breathe in and roll your neck back gently gazing up at the ceiling. Breathe out and roll your neck to the right reaching your right ear towards your right shoulder again. <i>(Complete three more neck circles and then switch directions. Repeat the neck circles in the opposite direction.)</i> 2. Shoulder Stretch: On your next breath in, lift your shoulders up towards your ears. Breathe out through your nose and relax your shoulders away from your ears. Release all the tension from your shoulders. Continue lifting your shoulders when you breathe in and relaxing your shoulders down when you breathe out.” <i>(Complete five more rounds.)</i> 3. Back Stretch: Breathe in and lift your arms overhead. Breathe out and twist to the right. Rest your right hand on the back of your chair and your left hand on the outside of your right leg. Look back over your right shoulder. Complete three deep breaths before repeating on the left side. 4. Come back through the center and notice the impacts of the Seated Stretches on your body today.
<p>Questions to Ask</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What am I feeling now? (name emotion) ● What physical sensations do I feel? ● What am I thinking?

Half Sun Sequence

- **Mountain:** Stand tall with your arms by your sides, palms facing forward.
- **Extended Mountain:** Breathe in and reach your arms overhead, extending your fingertips towards the ceiling.
- **Forward Fold:** Breathe out, and fold your torso over your legs.
- **Extended Mountain:** Breathe in, and reach your arms all the way back up.
- **Mountain:** Breathe out, and stand tall like a mountain. This completes one round of Half Sun Sequence. [Repeat as many rounds as needed.]



Mindful Tool: **Top Hat**

Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Improves focus● Calms emotions● Increases balance
Instructions	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Opening: Stand in Mountain. Place your hands on the top of your head, and interlace your fingers. Your elbows are bent to the sides. <i>Optional:</i> Turn your palms up toward the ceiling so the backs of your hands are touching your head.2. Breathe in and extend your hands toward the ceiling, straightening your elbows (making a Top Hat). At the same time, lift your heels off the floor and come up onto your toes.3. Breathe out and slowly lower your hands to the top of your head, bending your elbows. At the same time, slowly lower your heels to the floor, with control. This completes one round of Top Hat.4. Repeat as many rounds as needed while connecting each movement to a breath.5. Closing: Release your arms to your sides, and stand in Mountain. End with a long, deep breath in and out.
Questions to Ask	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● What am I feeling now? (name emotion)● What physical sensations do I feel?● What am I thinking?

How to integrate emotional self-regulation into the day

Identify Triggers: Identify your triggers by making a list of all the times when you've given in to your negative impulses at work. When you've identified emotions and reactions that are particularly challenging, support yourself with intentional breaks (breathe, move, or relax).

What are your triggers? What parts of the day do you experience them typically?

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Tip: Consider keeping a Stress Diary to identify where you need to improve your stress management skills, and to understand the levels of stress at which you are happiest and most effective.

What can you do to support yourself when you are triggered?

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NOTES

Mindfulness Apps

Headspace: <https://www.headspace.com/educators> (Free for educators)

Stop, Breathe & Think: <https://www.stopbreathethink.com> (Some free meditations)

Insight Timer: <https://insighttimer.com> (Free)

Calm: <https://www.calm.com> (Free for educators)

Smiling Mind: <https://www.smilingmind.com.au/smiling-mind-app> (Free)

Oxford MBCT: <https://oxfordmindfulness.org/news/oxford-mbct-app/> (Free)