

SOMATIC THERAPY TOOLKIT

THE INTRICATE CONNECTION
BETWEEN MIND AND BODY

Understanding Somatic Therapy

Somatic therapy acknowledges the intricate connection between the mind and body. It recognizes that our experiences, emotions, and memories are not only stored in the mind but also manifested in the body.

SOMATIC THERAPY

Somatic therapy is a holistic form of psychotherapy that focuses on the mind-body connection to address emotional and psychological issues. It involves exploring bodily sensations, movements, and expressions as valuable sources of information and healing.

MIND-BODY CONNECTION

The mind-body connection refers to the relationship between our thoughts, emotions, and bodily sensations. What we think and feel can influence our physical state, and conversely, our physical experiences can impact our mental and emotional well-being.

Benefits of Somatic Awareness

Somatic therapy offers a range of potential benefits that can positively impact various aspects of your well-being. By cultivating somatic awareness, you open doors to a deeper understanding of yourself and your experiences.

ENHANCED SELF-AWARENESS

Somatic therapy encourages you to pay attention to bodily sensations, fostering a heightened awareness of your physical and emotional states.

IMPROVED EMOTIONAL REGULATION

Through somatic practices, you can learn to identify and regulate emotions by recognising their physical manifestations.

STRESS REDUCTION

Somatic techniques such as breathwork and mindful movement can help reduce stress by promoting relaxation and grounding.

TRAUMA HEALING

By addressing physical aspects of trauma stored in the body, individuals may experience a sense of release and healing which aids trauma recovery.

ENHANCED RESILIENCE

By understanding and working with your body's responses, you may develop coping strategies that promote adaptability in the face of challenges.

GREATER MINDFULNESS

Somatic practices often involve mindfulness, the practice of being fully present in the moment, leading to a more fulfilling and intentional life.

Setting Intentions

Setting clear intentions is an important step in maximising the benefits of somatic therapy. By defining your goals, you provide direction to your therapeutic journey, making it a more personalised and meaningful experience.

Reflect on your current emotional state and any challenges you may be facing. Consider both mental and physical aspects.

Envision the emotional and physical states you would like to achieve through somatic therapy. What positive changes are you seeking?

Identify specific goals you would like to address and that align with your overall wellbeing.

Write a brief commitment statement summarising your dedication to the somatic therapy process.

Body Scan Meditation

Body scan meditation is a powerful somatic practice that enhances awareness of bodily sensations. This exercise promotes relaxation and mindfulness by systematically bringing attention to different parts of the body.

Find a comfortable position and take a few deep breaths to center yourself.

Direct your focus to your feet. Notice any sensations, such as warmth, coolness, or tingling. Take a moment to acknowledge and breathe into these sensations.

Shift your attention to your legs. Feel the weight of your legs and notice any tension or areas of relaxation. Inhale and exhale, allowing any tension to release.

Bring awareness to your pelvic area. Feel the connection with the support beneath you. Notice the sensations in your hips and lower back. Breathe into any areas of tightness.

Gently shift your attention to your abdomen. Feel the rise and fall with each breath. Allow any tension in the abdominal area to soften as you breathe.

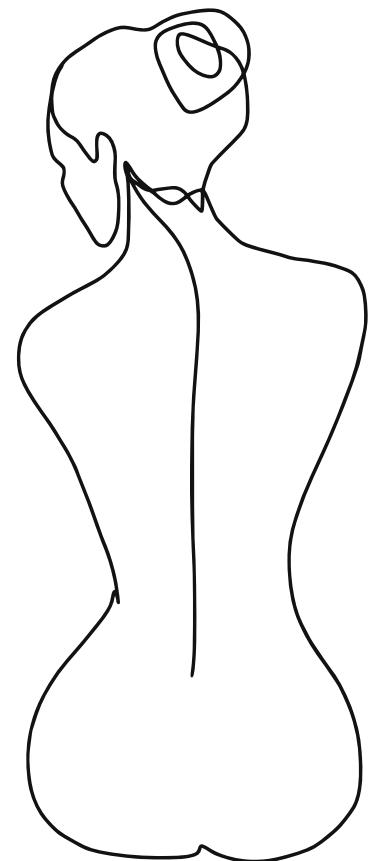
Notice the expansion and contraction of your chest as you breathe. Feel the sensations in your upper back. If there's any tightness, breathe into it, letting it release.

Direct your attention to your shoulders and arms. Feel the weight of your arms and any sensations in your shoulders. Take a moment to relax your shoulders with each exhale.

Bring awareness to your hands. Notice any warmth, tingling, or pressure. Allow your hands to rest comfortably.

Shift your focus to your neck. Be aware of any sensations or tightness. With each breath, imagine releasing any tension.

Finally, bring your attention to your head. Notice sensations in your face, jaw, and scalp. Allow your facial muscles to soften, and release any tension you may be holding.



Mapping Physical Sensations

This worksheet helps you identify the sensations in your body. By mapping these, you gain insights into your body's signals and can foster a deeper connection with yourself.

Head and Face

Close your eyes and bring attention to your head and face. What sensations do you notice? "I feel some tension in my forehead, and my cheeks are warm."

Neck and Shoulders

Shift your focus to your neck and shoulders. Describe any sensations you encounter. "I notice tension in my shoulders, and there's a tingling in my neck."

Chest and Heart Area

Direct your attention to your chest and heart. What sensations arise? "I feel my heart beating steadily, and there's a warmth in my chest."

Abdomen and Stomach

Explore the sensations in your abdomen and stomach. "There's a gentle tightness in my stomach, and I feel a subtle fluttering sensation."

Arms and Hands

Extend your awareness to your arms and hands. What do you feel in these areas? "My arms feel relaxed, and palms warm."

Back

Pay attention to your back. Are there sensations of tension? "I sense support against the surface I'm on, and there's a slight tension in my upper back."

Hips and Pelvis

Explore the sensations in your hips and pelvis. "There's a comfortable pressure in my hips, and I feel a sense of grounding in my pelvis."

Legs and Feet

Finally, bring your awareness to your legs and feet. Describe any sensations you encounter. "My legs feel heavy, and there's a cool sensation in my feet."



Body Awareness Journal

A body awareness journal is a place for you to track changes in your bodily sensations over time so that you can deepen your understanding of the mind-body connection.

Date: _____

Describe your overall emotional state today. How are you feeling mentally and emotionally?

Take a moment to focus on your body. Note any sensations, discomfort, or areas of ease. Be specific about different body parts.

Reflect on the activities and events of the day. Were there specific situations that triggered noticeable bodily sensations? Note any correlations.

Identify any moments when you were particularly mindful of your body today. This could be during a specific activity, a conversation, or a moment of relaxation.

Compare today's observations with previous entries. Have you noticed any changes or patterns in your bodily awareness over time?

Write down any reflections or insights gained from today's body awareness practice. What did you learn about your mind-body connection?

The RAIN Technique

The RAIN Technique, developed by Michele McDonald, encourages you to Recognize, Allow, Investigate, and Nurture your emotional experiences.

R	<p>Recognize:</p> <p>Begin by recognizing sensations in your body. What do you feel physically as you explore your emotions? Identify any tension, warmth, tingling, or other bodily responses.</p> <p>Acknowledge the emotions present. Name them without judgment. What emotions are arising? Anxiety, sadness, joy, or a combination?</p>
A	<p>Allow:</p> <p>Give yourself permission to feel without suppressing or resisting emotions. Allow them to exist without judgment. How willing are you to accept and allow the emotions to be present in your body?</p> <p>Bring attention to your breath. Allow it to flow naturally. Notice how your breath responds to the acknowledged emotions.</p>
I	<p>Investigate:</p> <p>Explore the physical sensations associated with the recognized emotions. Where do you feel them in your body? Is there tightness, heaviness, or any specific movement?</p> <p>Investigate the root of the emotions. Are there memories, thoughts, or triggers connected to these feelings?</p>
N	<p>Nurture:</p> <p>Cultivate a sense of self-compassion. How can you offer kindness to yourself in this moment? Consider comforting gestures or affirmations that support emotional well-being.</p> <p>Reflect on how the RAIN Technique has influenced your somatic experience. How do you feel now compared to the beginning?</p>

Emotions in the Body

Understanding how emotions manifest in the body can provide valuable insights into your emotional landscape. This worksheet is designed to help you explore and articulate the intricate relationship between your emotions and physical experiences.

IDENTIFYING EMOTIONS

Begin by reflecting on your current emotional state. Identify the primary emotion you are experiencing. It could be joy, sadness, anger, fear, or any other emotion.

For example: "Feeling a mix of frustration and sadness."

EMOTIONAL LANDSCAPE

Bring your attention to your body. Notice any sensations or changes in different areas. Pay attention to your chest, stomach, head, and limbs. How does your body respond to the identified emotion?

For example: "I feel a tightness in my chest, and my shoulders are tense."

SPECIFIC BODILY SENSATIONS

Break down the physical sensations associated with the identified emotion. Describe the sensations in detail. For instance, is there warmth, tightness, tingling, or a sense of lightness?

For example: "My stomach feels heavy, and my hands feel shaky."

BODY SCAN FOR EMOTIONS

Conduct a brief body scan to explore how the identified emotion is present in various parts of your body. Start from your head and gradually move down to your feet. Take note of any shifts in sensations.

For example: "Frustration is in my jaw, and there's tension in my legs."

Consider how this newfound awareness can be applied in your daily life. How might recognising the connection between emotions and bodily sensations influence your responses to different situations?

Grounding Techniques

Grounding techniques help you connect with the present moment and establish a sense of stability. Use this cheat sheet to remind yourself of the grounding techniques you can use to bring you back to the here and now.

Rooted Tree Visualisation

Imagine yourself as a tree. Feel your feet firmly planted on the ground, envisioning roots extending from them into the Earth. With each inhale, draw energy from the ground, and with each exhale, release any tension or distractions.

5-4-3-2-1 Technique

Engage your senses to ground yourself. Name five things you can see, four things you can touch, three things you can hear, two things you can smell, and one thing you can taste. This exercise brings attention to your immediate surroundings.

Body Scan Grounding

Conduct a brief body scan, focusing on each body part sequentially. As you bring awareness to each area, notice the sensations, warmth, or contact with the surface beneath you. This practice helps anchor you in the present moment.

Square Breathing

Inhale for a count of four, then hold for a count of four, exhale for a count of four, and pause for a count of four. Repeat this square breathing pattern several times. This rhythmic breathing exercise promotes a sense of calm and centeredness.

Mindful Walking

Take a slow, deliberate walk, paying close attention to each step. Feel the connection between your feet and the ground. Notice the sensations of lifting, moving, and placing each foot. This simple walking exercise can be done indoors or outdoors.

Grounding Affirmations

Develop a set of grounding affirmations that resonate with you. Repeat these grounding affirmations when you feel the need to ground yourself or reconnect with the present moment. For example, "I am rooted and present in this moment."

Expressing Emotions with Movement

Movement can be a powerful way to express emotions stored in your body. This worksheet encourages you to explore movements that align with your emotions.

GROUNDING STOMP

Imagine releasing frustration or anxiety with each stomp. Lift your knees slightly and bring your foot down with force, feeling the connection with the ground. Repeat, allowing the energy to ground you.

ANGER RELEASE

Stand with feet shoulder-width apart. Make fists and, with a strong exhale, release tension by punching gently into the air. Allow your body to move with the force. Repeat until you feel a sense of release.

SWAYING MEDITATION

Stand or sit comfortably and begin swaying gently from side to side. As you sway, allow your body to release any tension, syncing the movement with your breath. This is a calming and centering practice.

FLOWING MOVEMENTS

Practise fluid, continuous movements. Imagine your body as water, flowing and releasing tension. This can involve gentle swaying, circular arm motions, or any movement that feels soothing.

JOYFUL DANCE

Play uplifting music and allow your body to move freely. Dance with joy, expressing happiness through your movements. Let go of any inhibitions and focus on the pleasure of the dance.

GENTLE STRETCHING

Engage in slow, deliberate stretches. Focus on areas of tension, and with each stretch, visualise releasing that tension. Incorporate deep breaths to enhance the relaxation response.



Trauma-Informed Somatic Exploration

Trauma-informed somatic practices prioritise safety, choice, and empowerment. This worksheet introduces trauma-informed principles to guide your somatic exploration. It is important to approach these practices with gentleness, respecting your boundaries and pacing.

Prioritise creating a safe space for exploration. Identify environments, movements, and sensations that feel safe. If at any point you feel overwhelmed, return to a grounding practice.

Acknowledge that you are in control of your somatic exploration. You have the autonomy to choose the pace, intensity, and duration of each practice.

Regularly check in with your body sensations. Notice any discomfort, tension, or changes. If something feels triggering, pause and use a grounding technique.

Frame somatic practices as gentle invitations rather than demands. Invite your body to participate, respecting its responses. Be patient and compassionate with yourself.

Begin each session with grounding techniques to establish a sense of safety and connection with the present moment.

Engage in slow movements to maintain awareness and prevent overwhelm. Pay attention to the sensations, and if anything feels triggering, slow down or pause.

Create a body map where you mark areas of comfort, discomfort, and neutrality. This visual aid can assist in tracking changes while respecting your boundaries.

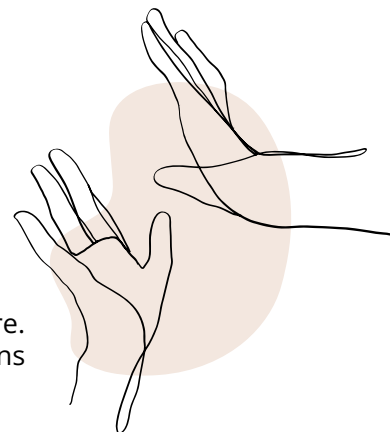
Integrate self-compassion breaks during somatic practices. Remind yourself that it's okay to feel whatever arises and you have the strength to navigate these sensations.

Identifying Safe Spaces

Creating internal safe spaces is a powerful somatic practice that allows you to establish a sense of safety and comfort within your body. This worksheet guides you in identifying and cultivating safe spaces to support your well-being.

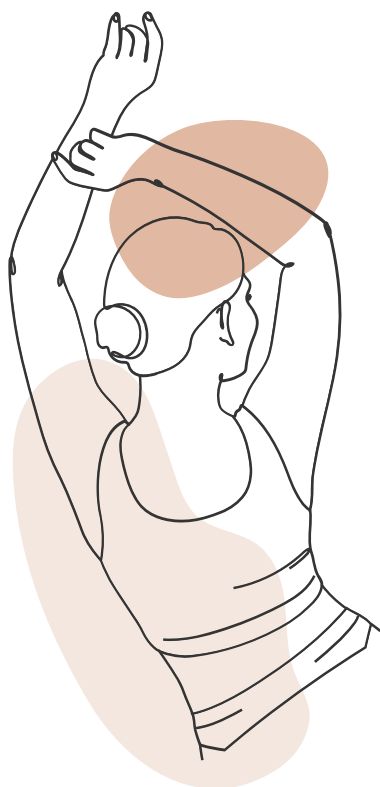
REFLECT ON COMFORTABLE SENSATIONS

Reflect on sensations in your body that feel inherently comfortable and safe. These could be warmth, softness, or a sense of grounding.



RECALL POSITIVE MEMORIES

Think about a time or place where you felt completely at ease and secure. It could be a specific memory or a general feeling. Explore the sensations associated with this memory as potential safe spaces within your body.



MINDFUL EXPLORATION

Engage in a short body scan, paying attention to areas that elicit a sense of calmness or safety. Notice any regions where tension seems to naturally release. These areas can serve as safe spaces.

VISUALISATION EXERCISE

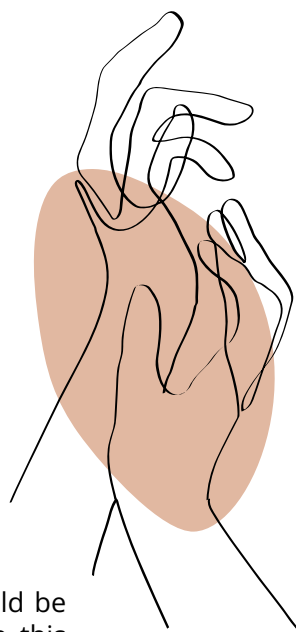
Picture a place in your mind where you feel safe and secure. It could be a real location or an imagined one. As you visualise this place, focus on the bodily sensations that arise. Imagine bringing these sensations into your current physical space.

BREATH AND AFFIRMATIONS

Practice deep breathing while repeating affirmations that emphasize safety and security. For example, with each inhale, say, "I am safe," and with each exhale, say, "I am secure."

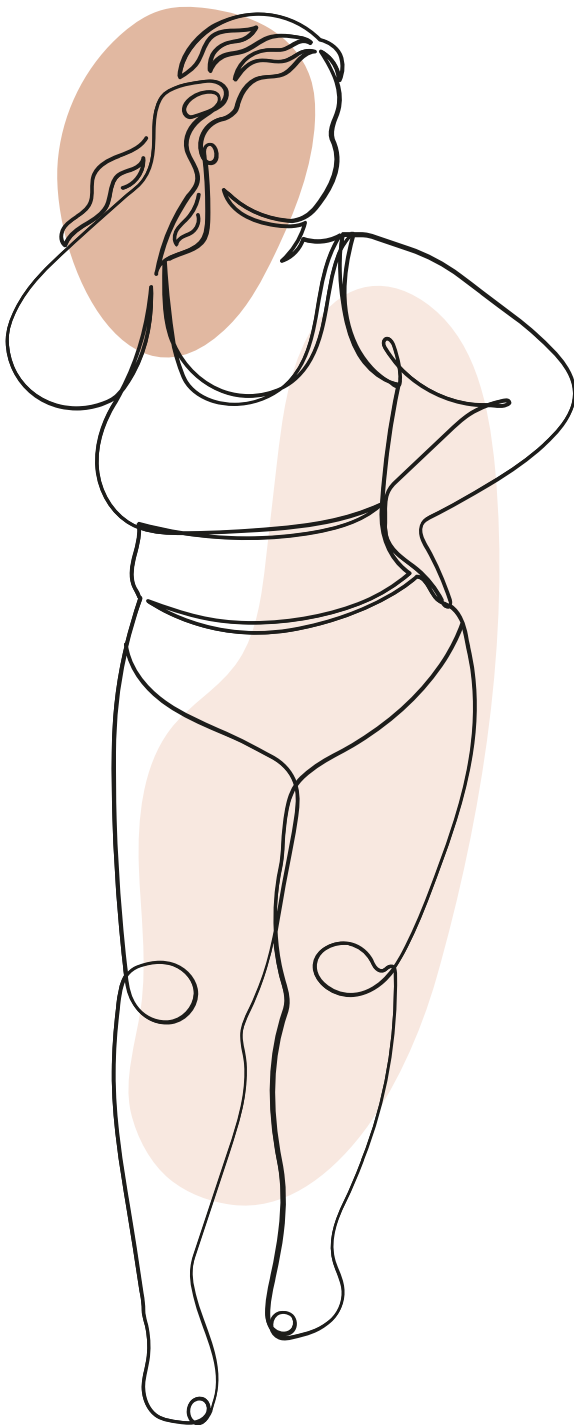
PHYSICAL ANCHORS

Choose a specific gesture or touch that you associate with safety. It could be placing your hand on your heart or gently holding your own arm. Use this physical anchor during challenging moments to evoke a sense of safety.



Soothing Sensory Experiences

Reflect on your favourite soothing sensory experiences for each of the five senses. Identifying these personalised strategies can help you build a self-soothing toolkit.



SIGHT

List three visuals or scenes that bring you comfort and relaxation. For example: A serene nature landscape, soft candlelight, a piece of artwork

1

2

3

SOUND

Identify sounds that comfort you or have a calming effect on you. List three sounds. For example, gentle rainfall, relaxing music, ocean waves, wind chimes

1

2

3

TOUCH

Consider sensations that bring comfort. List three tactile experiences. For example: Soft blankets, a warm cup of tea in your hands, hugging a plush toy

1

2

3

TASTE

Reflect on flavours that bring you joy or relaxation. List three favourite tastes. For example: Comforting herbal tea, dark chocolate, fresh fruit

1

2

3

SMELL

Identify scents that have a positive impact on your mood. List three favourite smells. For example: Lavender, vanilla, freshly baked bread

1

2

3

Breathing Techniques Cheat Sheet

Type	Technique	Practice and Notes:
Grounding Breath	Inhale through your nose, feeling your breath move into your belly. Exhale through your mouth, releasing any tension. Repeat this breath, focusing on the connection between your breath and the support beneath you.	Note how your body feels before and after.
Box Breathing	Inhale for a count of 4, hold for 4, exhale for 4, and pause for 4. Repeat this box breathing pattern. Visualise each side of the box as you breathe, creating a sense of balance and rhythm.	Note any changes in your stress levels.
4-7-8 Breathing	Inhale quietly through your nose for a count of 4. Hold your breath for a count of 7. Exhale completely through your mouth for a count of 8. This technique can help regulate the nervous system and promote relaxation.	Record any experiences, thoughts or sensations.
Alternate Nostril Breathing	Using your thumb and ring finger, alternate closing one nostril while inhaling and exhaling through the other. This technique promotes balance and a sense of calm, helping to regulate the nervous system.	Reflect on the balance it brings to your mind and body.
Somatic Experiencing	Pay attention to your breath without trying to control it. Notice the natural rhythm and depth. Allow your breath to gently guide you into a state of present-moment awareness. This encourages a mindful connection with your breath.	Describe how your body feels before and after.
Stress-Release Breath	Inhale deeply through your nose, allowing your belly to expand. Exhale fully through your mouth, releasing any tension. As you exhale, imagine letting go of stored stress. Repeat this breath, visualising the release with each exhale.	Reflect on the balance it brings to your mind and body.

The Mind-Body Connection

The mind-body connection explores how thoughts and emotions manifest in your body. By recognizing these connections, you can develop a deeper understanding of the interplay between your mental and physical experiences.

Choose an emotion you've recently experienced and reflect on a specific situation that triggered this emotion.

Revisit the situation in your mind. Notice how this emotion feels in your body. Are there specific sensations or changes in different areas? Pay attention to subtleties.

What thoughts accompanied this emotion? What were you thinking during the situation? Explore any internal dialogue or beliefs associated with the emotion.

Connect the thoughts identified with the sensations in your body. How did your thoughts influence the physical sensations you experienced?

What did you discover about the connection between your thoughts and bodily sensations during this exploration?

Mindful Movement

Mindful movement involves bringing awareness to your body's movements with intention and presence. This worksheet introduces mindful movement exercises to help you cultivate a deeper connection between your mind and body.

MINDFUL WALKING

Walk slowly and deliberately. Pay attention to each step, feeling the shifting of weight and the contact with the ground. Notice the sensations in your feet and legs.

CONSCIOUS BREATHING

Coordinate your breath with movements. Inhale as you raise your arms, and exhale as you lower them. Focus on the flow of the breath-movement connection.

BODY SCAN IN MOTION

Combine a body scan with movement. While sitting, tilt your head from side to side, paying attention to sensations in your neck. Move through different body parts mindfully.

YOGA OR TAI CHI

Engage in a mindful movement practice like yoga or Tai Chi. Be aware of breath, posture, and the sensations in each movement.

DANCE MEDITATION

Put on soothing music and move freely. Dance with intention, focusing on the sensations and emotions expressed through movement.

QI GONG FLOW

Explore Qi Gong. Pay attention to the breath as you move your arms, shift your weight, and engage in gentle, rhythmic exercises.

How did practising mindful movement feel in comparison to regular movement?

What changes did you notice in your awareness or connection to your body?

Common Sensations Cheat Sheet

Use these sensations as starting points for your somatic awareness journey. Paying attention to these can deepen your understanding of your mind-body connection.

Warmth or Coolness:

Notice areas of your body that feel warmer or cooler than others.

Tingling or Numbness:

Pay attention to sensations of tingling or numbness in different body parts.

Heaviness or Lightness:

Observe if certain areas of your body feel heavy, grounded, or light and airy.

Contraction or Expansion:

Feel into whether specific muscles or areas are contracting or expanding.

Fluttering or Pulsing:

Be aware of subtle movements, like a fluttering feeling or a pulsing sensation.

Tightness or Relaxation:

Identify areas that feel tense or tight, as well as those that are relaxed.

Stability or Instability:

Note sensations related to your overall sense of stability or instability.

Gurgling or Digestive Sensations:

Sensations in the stomach or abdomen, such as gurgling or movement.

Pressure or Release:

Recognise any sensations of pressure or the release of tension in the body.

Grounding Sensations:

Explore feelings of connection to the ground or a sense of being grounded.

Body Scan and Somatic Sensations

HEAD AND FACE

Headaches or lightness
Jaw tension or relaxation
Face tingling or warmth

NECK AND SHOULDERS

Tightness or looseness
Heavy or light feeling
Warmth or coolness

ARMS AND HANDS

Tingling or numbness
Warmth or coolness in hands
Heaviness or lightness

CHEST AND HEART

Expansion or contraction
Heart fluttering or calmness
The rhythm of your breath

ABDOMEN

Butterfly sensations
Digestive gurgling
Expansion or contraction

BACK

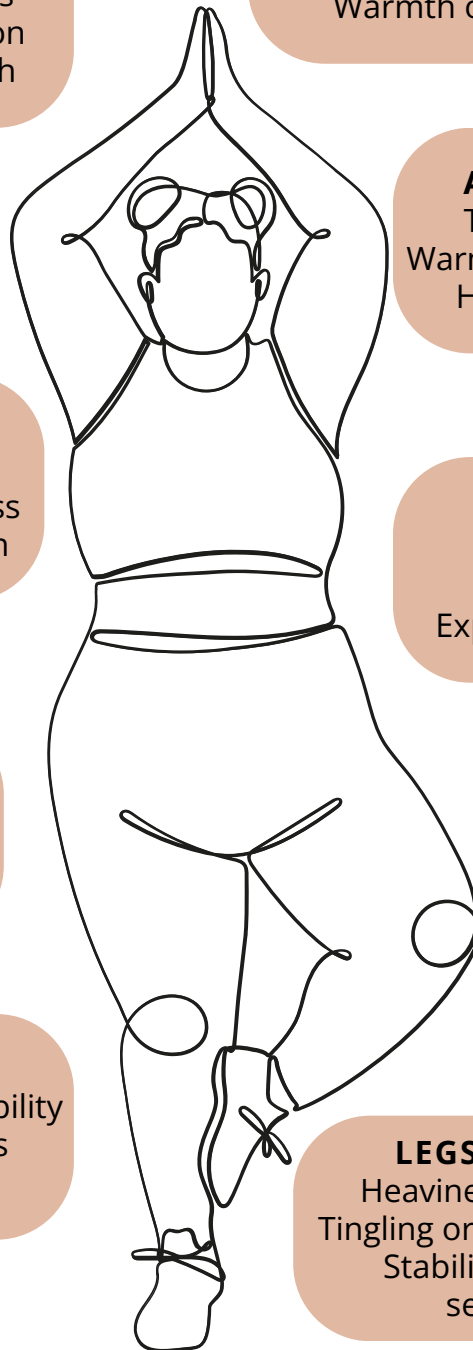
Curvature of your spine
Areas of tension or relaxation
Warmth or coolness

PELVIS AND HIPS

Sense of stability or instability
Tightness or openness
Warmth or coolness

LEGS AND FEET

Heaviness or lightness
Tingling or pins and needles
Stability/grounding sensations



Breath Awareness: Pay attention to the natural rhythm of your breath.

Temperature: Notice warmth or coolness in different areas.

Movements: Observe any subtle movements or shifts in your body.

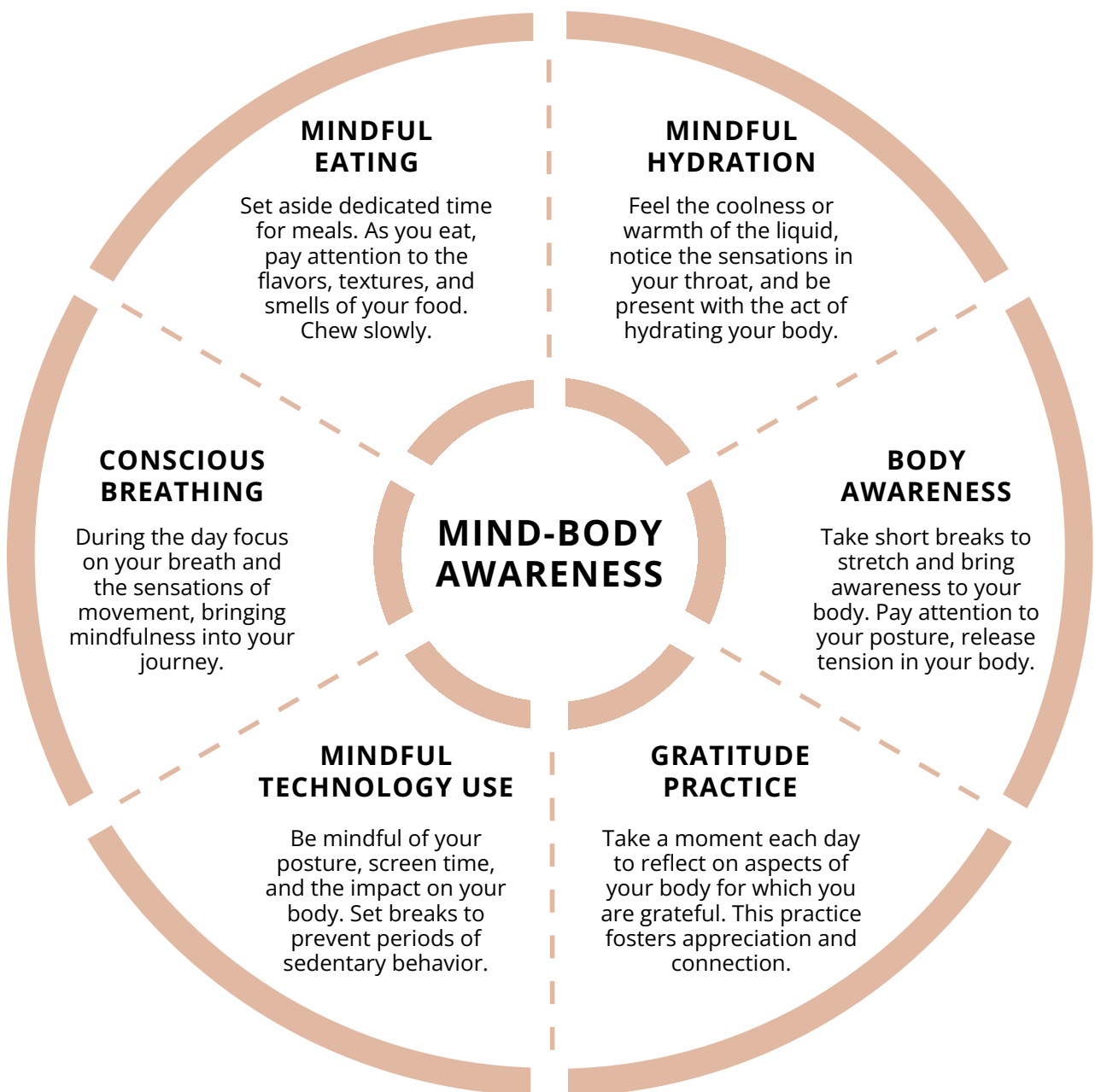
Somatic Sensations Word Bank

In this collection, you'll find a diverse set of words aimed at helping you express the sensations that make up your somatic experience. Whether you're engaged in mindfulness practices, therapeutic exploration, or simply seeking a more profound connection with your body, these words provide a rich vocabulary to communicate and reflect on your own somatic awareness.

TEXTURE		VIBRATION		SPEED	
smooth rough soft hard prickly velvety grainy	bumpy slick fuzzy jagged spongy feathery leathery	pulsating quivering tingling vibrating humming buzzing fluttering	waves shivering rumbling gurgling quaking shimmering radiating	fast slow quick gradual jerky steady rapid	gentle brisk smooth hesitant sudden moderate erratic
SHAPE		PRESSURE		WHERE?	
round near curved angular wavy spikey expanding	constricting spiral irregular symmetrical amorphous cylindrical crystalline	heavy light tight loose intense mild constricting	pulsating build-up uniform localized deep pressure radiating balanced	head face neck shoulders arms hands chest	abdomen back spine hips & pelvis joints legs feet
TEMPERATURE		ABSENCE		PHYSIOLOGICAL	
warm hot icy cool cold clammy damp	chilly warming up cooling down tepid burning balmy freezing	empty hollow vacant void blank numb devoid	silent motionless colorless deserted inert featureless stillness	heartbeat breath digestion circulation dizziness sensitivity sweating	pupil dilation shivering goose bumps runny mucus oozing eyesight focus
PAIN		SIZE		COLOR	
sharp dull throbbing stinging aching burning cramping	radiating shooting pressure nagging tender sore crushing	expansive compact elongated vast microscopic dense sparse	minute broad growing intense intricate continuous infinite	vivid subdued bright dull warm cool contrasting	pastel neon earthy translucent mottled iridescent multicolored

The Mind-Body Integration

Integrating mind-body awareness into daily activities enhances your overall well-being and deepens your connection with yourself. This worksheet provides guidance on incorporating mindfulness into various routine tasks, promoting a holistic and mindful approach to everyday life.



Somatic Processing

Trigger: Identify and describe the situation or event that triggered a response.

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Emotions

Thoughts

Physical sensations

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Describe the somatic coping mechanisms you used. For example, grounding technique, mindful movement, breathwork, sensory soothing

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Reflect on how well you coped in managing the somatic response.

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Identify insights or lessons learned from processing the trigger and response.

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