

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
<i>Hugged myself and curled up in a ball.</i>	<i>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>	<i>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.</i>
<i>Rubbed my temples.</i>	<i>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>	<i>I didn't feel so agitated, and my arousal came down. I was able to focus a little better.</i>

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.

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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 sand castles, 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?

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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?
<i>Boss yelled at me about being late to work</i>	<i>Heart pounding; blood rushing in my ears; felt very still</i>	<i>Breathing slowed; heart rate calmed; felt more settled and relaxed in my body</i>