

# Self-Regulation Strategies

Reduce ADHD Overwhelm, Distraction & Reactivity.  
Build Awareness, Insight, & Resilience for  
Emotion & Nervous-System Regulation.



## Belly Breathing

take a steady deep breath in through the nose...expanding the belly on the inhale. exhale out through the nose or mouth. inhale again & count slowly, then allow the out breath to be twice as long as the in breath. if you can inhale for 3 seconds. exhale for 6. focus on expanding the bell as large and wide as possible on the inhalation. remain or return in the present, in your body, with the breath as much as possible for these few minutes. repeat at least 3 times.

taking slow, deep breaths, changes the body's physiology. it allows us to down shift or transition out of a heightened fight, flight or freeze state. deep breathing gives adequate supply of oxygen to flow to both the heart & brain. deep breaths slow the heart rate, reduces blood pressure, & relaxes our muscles. all settling the nervous system.



## Mindfulness of the Body

become aware of your body. notice you have a body. notice how the body moves with the breath. notice the sensation of breathing through the nostrils or mouth. connect to each part of the body, starting with the toes, moving slowly all the way up to the top of the head, section by section through what's known as a body scan.

body awareness is another gateway to be fully present. it helps us in transitioning out of stress or overwhelm, when our mind is overly focused on the past or the future. Being in the body helps to ground us, return to our center, & more skillfully manage our attention.



## Sensory Profile

check in with your internal & external sensory experience. am I hungry or thirsty? hot or cold? do I need to go to the bathroom? is my environment too loud or too bright? am I overstimulated in some way by my surroundings or my thoughts? what is 1 small thing I can change to improve my current situation? if you'd like an idea...try splashing ice cold water on your face or neck. remove or add a layer of clothing. chant, hum or sing. put on noise cancelling earphones, or listen to pleasant music or sounds. go outside in nature, connect to the earth, water or wind.

it's possible to be in sensory overload & not be aware of it. you will that you might be having difficulty focusing, initiating a task, prioritize, make decisions, or problem solving. use this recognition, without judgement, as data to strategize & make a micro adjustment.



## Move Your Body

as if looking behind you, slowly move your chin over your left shoulder. now rotate your head over the right shoulder. back to center. raise your forehead towards the ceiling. now drop your chin to your chest. & back up. bring your left ear down to your left shoulder. now your right ear to your right shoulder. & back to center. puff out your chest, bring your shoulder blades together. if it's comfortable, grab your hands behind your back. again reset. twist your upper body all the way behind you towards your left, then to your right. reset again. shake out your hands, then your arms & shoulders, now whole body. stand. dance, walk, or climb stairs.

physical activity of any kind jumpstarts a new perspective, taking us out of overanalyzing. movement increases blood flow, think of movement as food for the brain. exercise helps us sustain attention, increases energy levels, boosts self-esteem & helps improve sleep. exercise stimulates the production of dopamine, serotonin & endorphins, reducing symptoms of depression & anxiety. Movement generates positive moods & overall emotional well-being.



## Balance & Coordination

jump up & down, try landing in the exact same place each time. stand on one leg, then the other. if that's too easy close your eyes. lunge forward with one foot, lower your body by bending both knees to a 90-degree angle. walk in a straight line, pretend you're on a balance beam, heel first, then toe. take 1 minute to hold a yoga posture of your choosing.

notice tendencies of spacing out or rumination, utilizing compassionate awareness to then redirect your attention by stimulating your cerebellum with balance & coordination. enhance cognitive function, learning & comprehension, increasing brain growth & flexibility known as neuroplasticity.



## Emotion Awareness

identify the specific emotion, if difficult, use the emotion wheel or How We Feel app. use curiosity to become familiar with & allow for the emotion. connect to where & how we experience emotion in the body. it in your throat or gut? does it feel like a volcanic eruption or heavy weight? separate the emotion itself from 'the story i'm telling myself'. name those particular thoughts as JUST thoughts. notice how emotional intensity in our body or our thoughts can change with time.

emotion identification leads to self-awareness, connection & presence. this can reduce reactivity, empowering us to speak & behave in closer alignment with our core values. it can help us navigate social interactions more skillfully & foster healthier relationships. we are able to lessen the grip of harmful habits & not be hijacked by our emotions. emotions drive motivation & decisions, creating space between experiencing emotion & response is key to achieving long-term goals & building emotional regulation.



SECOND ARROW ADHD COACHING  
SKILLFULLY NAVIGATING LIFE'S CHALLENGES



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