

Somatic Therapy Techniques by Elon Donovan

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Basic understanding of somatic therapy techniques basically encompass mind and body connection. This is essentially recognizing the ways our body reacts to traumas and triggers, and discovering ways to navigate them in practicing emotional recognition and regulation.

Breath Work & Techniques

Box method :

4 by 4 breathing technique where you inhale for 4 seconds, hold for 4 seconds, and release for 4 seconds.

This method will assist in immediate relief from triggering events which may impact one's functional ability. I find this method most impactful during **panic attack's**, which are more sudden and seem to come without a clear reason on the surface.

4 x 7 x 8 Breathing Method :

Deep inhale through the nose for 4 seconds. Hold for 7 seconds. Exhale for 8 seconds through the mouth.

I find this method most useful for **anxiety attacks**, which come more prolonged and in anticipation of a stressful event or person.

While engaging in either method, it is impactful to do so with mindfulness intention. Close your eyes to block out stimulation, place one hand on your heart and the other on your belly. This will maintain intention circulation flowing from your head to the abdomen.

Belly Breathing :

Deep inhaling through the nose, filling air into your belly, exhaling through the mouth until all air is deflated from the belly. Do so while laying down and building up to sitting in a chair and doing so while standing.

Benefits : reducing high blood pressure , increase focus and concentration, activate immune system , increase muscle function, increase blood flow and oxygen throughout our brain and body, brings warmth through hands and feet, reducing lactic acid in muscle tissue, reduce hormonal stress, lower heart rate

Stress & Nutrition :

I have learned through my personal journey the impact between our stress levels and what we put into our bodies. Whether it was having to eat plain meals due to high levels of acid reflux, to craving comfort foods when going through a hard time, emotionally. Our bodies' ways of transmuting the nutrients and benefits of our food directly impact our mental health. I found this when regulating and tracking my hormonal cycle. I started to eat more red meat during my pre-menstrual period and fish or shellfish while I was bleeding. I also incorporated more herbs, foods, and fruits that may alleviate my pain symptoms and cramping during my period. I know through my research on self esteem through my education, as well as growing through my own self esteem, the ways in which our weight impacts our mental health. To combat these notions, I have had to strip away guilt attached to food and understand what my body needs and how to regulate what I may crave. I've noticed in addition to green beans being absolutely delicious, they also decrease symptoms of depression whereas excess sugar can cause increased anxiety and burn out.

Tips to try :

- Fresh produce and fruits
- Leafy greens incorporated into your daily diet
- Shopping seasonal for produce
- Eat healthy sugars from natural sources
- Cut out brands that hide ingredients or resources
- Eat more roots and herbs high in antioxidants, inflammatory and high in cardiovascular health
- What you don't like to taste, blend in a sauce or smoothie
- Track your mood after meals in a journal or notes app
- Shop at local farmers markets and meat butchers
- Reduce processed foods in forms of snacks and sweets
- Limit and monitor the places you eat takeaway meals
- Incorporate complete proteins and whole grains
- Utilize the full color wheel into your diet
- Eat and drink your fiber

Journaling :

Throughout my childhood, into adulthood, I have always enjoyed utilizing journals to get out what was in my mind onto paper, for personal understanding and release. When I couldn't trust anyone else's opinions or judgement, I would grab a paper and pencil. I utilize writing in keeping up with the daily experiences in my life, jotting down a quick to-do list, or for shadow work prompts. When I need encouragement to write through my feelings in assistance to processing them, I have bought and used workbooks on emotional regulation, codependency, and self-love. These workbooks have been essential tools, especially during times of not being in therapy. I still have a tangible means to transparently lay out my internal roller coaster.