

Calm Down - Conflict De-escalation Readiness Exercises

De-escalating conflict is often stressful and requires calmness and a tactful approach. However, the ability to be calm is in itself a skill, especially when others around us are upset. You can build your ability to be calm through regular practice.



Calming Your Mind and Body:

When we are faced with uncomfortable or frustrating situations, our body's natural reaction is to tense up. And when we are tense and stressed we are more likely to respond to negativity with more negativity.

By learning to calm our mind and body, we have a better likelihood of responding with positive language and tone. And your **breath** is a powerful tool.

Let's Practice!

Here are some simple breathing exercises that can make a big difference if you make them part of your regular routine:

Before you get started, keep these tips in mind:

- Choose a place to do your breathing exercise. It could be in your bed, on your living room floor, or in a comfortable chair.
- Don't force it. This can make you feel more stressed.
- Try to do it at the same time once or twice a day.
- Wear comfortable clothes.



Breath Focus

While you do deep breathing, use a picture in your mind and a word or phrase to help you feel more relaxed.

1. Close your eyes if they're open.
2. Take a few big, deep breaths.
3. Breathe in through your nose for 5-10 seconds. As you do that, imagine that the air is filled with a sense of peace and calm. Try to feel it throughout your body.
4. Breathe out through your mouth for 5-10 seconds. While you're doing it, imagine that the air leaves with your stress and tension.
5. Now use a word or phrase with your breath. As you breathe in, say in your mind, "I breathe in peace and calm."
6. As you breathe out, say in your mind, "I breathe out stress and tension."
7. Continue as needed.

Muscle Relaxation

In this technique, you breathe in as you tense a muscle group and breathe out as you release it. Progressive muscle relaxation helps you relax physically and mentally.

1. Lie comfortably on the floor.
2. Take a few deep breaths to relax.
3. Breathe in. Tense the muscles of your feet.
4. Breathe out. Release the tension in your feet.
5. Breathe in. Tense your calf muscles.
6. Breathe out. Release the tension in your calves.
7. Work your way up your body. Tense each muscle group. This includes your legs, belly, chest, fingers, arms, shoulders, neck, and face.

Take a moment to check in with yourself. How are you feeling? More relaxed? Do you notice a difference between how you felt before?

