

## 6 Feel Better Fast Techniques Exercise

*Spend some time completing these exercises and discuss with your Licensed Brain Trainer.*

Here are six ways to make yourself feel better fast when you're feeling anxious, depressed, stressed, or overwhelmed. They are very simple to do, work quickly and have no downsides.

### 1. Havening

Havening is a very simple strategy—so easy even children can do it—you can use to calm yourself and wash away anxiousness or anger. It stimulates both sides of the brain and creates calming brainwaves in the emotional centers of the brain.

**Exercise: Practice havening whenever you're upset, stressed, or anxious.**

1. Cross your arms and put each hand on the opposite shoulder.
2. Gently stroke down.
3. While you're stroking down, say, "I am safe, I am here, this is now."
4. Repeat for 30-60 seconds,

### 2. Diaphragmatic (3 + 6 X 10) Breathing

When you're feeling anxious or angry, your breathing becomes shallow and fast. This causes a change in oxygen in your blood, making you more anxious. It becomes a vicious cycle, causing irritability, impulsiveness, confusion, and bad decision-making.

Learning to direct and control your breathing has immediate benefits. It calms the brain's amygdala (the brain's fear centers), counteracts the body's stress response, relaxes muscles, warms hands, and regulates heart rhythms. This simple diaphragmatic breathing exercise can help calm you almost immediately.

**Exercise: Practice 3 + 6 X 10 breathing to calm yourself.**

1. Inhale for 3 seconds through your nose.
2. Hold for 1 second.
3. Exhale for 6 seconds (twice as long as inhale).
4. Hold for 1 second.
5. Repeat 10 times. This will take less than 2 minutes.

### 3. Hand Warming

Visualizing warmth, especially in your hands, is another tool to feel better fast and counteract the fight or flight response. Hand warming elicits an immediate relaxation response by resetting your nervous system to counteract your stress response.

**Exercise: Practice the 3 + 6 X 10 breathing to calm yourself while doing the following:**

1. Close your eyes and hold your hands out, palms down, and visualize a campfire in front of you.
2. Focus. Think heat. You can hear the fire crackle, smell the aroma of fresh-cut wood burning, watch sparks fly and float up into the sky.
3. Now feel the soothing heat as it penetrates the surface of your skin and goes deep to warm your hands.
4. Picture this as you breathe deeply and count slowly to 20.

Look at the list of hand-warming images below and choose the ones that work best for you. Place a checkmark next to the ones you will try.

13 POTENTIAL HAND-WARMING IMAGES	
Holding someone's warm hand or touching their warm skin	
Appreciating someone else	
Putting your hands in warm sand at the beach	
Taking a hot bath or shower	
Sitting in a sauna	
Cuddling a baby	
Cuddling a warm, furry puppy or kitten	
Holding a warm cup of tea or sugar-free cocoa	
Holding your hands in front of a fire	
Wearing warm gloves	
Being wrapped in a warm towel	
Getting a massage with warm oil	
Holding a hot potato with warm gloves	

**4. Surround Yourself with Soothing Scents**

Certain scents are known to have mood enhancing, calming, or stimulating effects. Use an essential oil diffuser and the following essential oils.

**Exercise: Look at the list below and place a checkmark next to the ones you will try.**

SCENT	HELPFUL FOR	
Lavender	Anxiety, Grief, Memory, Pain relief	
Chamomile	Anxiety	
Jasmine	Anxiety	
Ylang Ylang	Memory, Trauma, Anger	
Peppermint	Stimulating	
Eucalyptus	Stimulating, Focus	

## 5. Create an Emotional Rescue Playlist

Music can soothe, inspire, improve your mood, and help you focus. In his powerful book, *The Secret Language of the Heart*, author Barry Goldstein reviews the neuroscience properties of music and finds that it can stimulate emotional circuits in the brain, release oxytocin, the cuddle hormone, and create peak emotions that the amount of dopamine.

**Exercise: Create your own emotional rescue playlist to boost your mood quickly. Place a checkmark by the following suggested tunes you'll add to your emotional rescue playlist.**

Without lyrics (words can be distracting):

- Sonata for Two Pianos in D Major (K. 448) – Mozart
- Clair de Lune – Debussy
- Adagio for Strings – Samuel Barber
- Piano Sonata No. 17 in D Minor (“The Tempest”) – Beethoven
- Weightless – Marconi Union
- Flotus – Flying Lotus
- Lost in Thought – Jon Hopkins
- Brain enhancing music pieces specifically composed to enhance mood, memory, gratitude, creativity, energy, focus, motivation and inspiration by Barry Goldstein (can be found at BrainMD.com).

With lyrics:

- Good Vibrations – The Beach Boys
- Don't Stop Me Now – Queen
- Uptown Girl – Billy Joel
- Dancing Queen – Abba
- Eye of the Tiger – Survivor
- I'm a Believer – The Monkeys
- Girls Just Wanna Have Fun – Cyndi Lauper
- Livin' on a Prayer – Bon Jovi

## 6. Loving Kindness Meditation

One of our favorite forms of meditation is called Loving Kindness Meditation (LKM), which is intended to develop feelings of goodwill and warmth toward others. It has been found to quickly increase positive

emotions and decrease negative ones, decrease pain and migraine headaches, reduce symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder and social prejudice, increase gray matter in the emotional processing areas of the brain, and boost social connectedness. Think of it as a way to soothe the hidden dragons inside you.

**Exercise: Practice Loving Kindness Meditation.**

1. Sit in a comfortable and relaxed position and close your eyes.
2. Take two to three deep breaths, taking twice as long to exhale.
3. Let any worries or concerns drift away and feel your breath moving through the area around your heart.
4. As you sit, quietly or silently repeat the following or similar phrases:
  - ★ May I be safe and secure
  - ★ May I be healthy and strong
  - ★ May I be happy and purposeful
  - ★ May I be at peace

*Let the intentions expressed in these phrases sink in as you repeat them. Allow the feelings to grow deeper. After a few repetitions, direct the phrases to someone you feel grateful for or someone who has helped you:*

- ★ May you be safe and secure
- ★ May you be healthy and strong
- ★ May you be happy and purposeful
- ★ May you be at peace

*Next, visualize someone you feel neutral about. Choose among people you neither like nor dislike and repeat the phrases.*

*Next, visualize someone you don't like or with whom you are having a hard time. Kids who are being teased or bullied at school often feel quite empowered when they send love to the people who are making them miserable.*

*Finally, direct the phrases toward everyone universally.*

- ★ May all beings be safe and secure.

You can do this for 10 to 30 minutes; it's up to you.