

The Grounding *Toolkit.*

Eight short practices to steady the body, soften the mind, and create a little more choice in the middle of a hard day.

Healing is not *one* big thing. It is a hundred small returns.

If you are reading this, something in you is looking for a steadier place to land. That is not a small thing. It is the first move of the work.

These practices are not therapy, and they are not meant to replace working with a clinician. They are short, useful tools you can use between sessions, in the car, at your desk, before a hard conversation, or in the middle of a long night.

Each one is built on the same idea: the body needs to feel a little safer before the mind can think clearly. Begin with the body. The rest will follow.

Try one. Then try another. Notice which ones your nervous system trusts. There is no order, no schedule, and no grade.

With care,

Dr. Fab

The *eight* practices.

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Practice 01

The 90-Second Reset.

For activation, overwhelm, or the moment right after a wave of feeling has just moved through you.

- 01 Look slowly around the room. Find three steady shapes — a doorframe, a corner, a cup. Name them quietly to yourself.
- 02 Feel both feet on the floor, or one hand on a steady surface. Let the support do its job.
- 03 Take one slow breath in. Lengthen the exhale until it is twice as long as the inhale.
- 04 Let the next step be small. *One thing. Not the whole day.*

WHEN TO USE IT

Anytime you notice your chest tightening, your jaw setting, or your thoughts starting to race ahead of you.

Practice 02

The Sensory Scan.

For moments when the mind has run ahead and the body has been left behind. A way to come back to the present.

- 01 Name five things you can see. Slowly. Without rushing.
- 02 Name four things you can feel — the fabric on your skin, the chair under you, the air on your face.
- 03 Name three things you can hear — including the quiet ones.
- 04 Name two things you can smell, or two things you remember smelling.
- 05 Name one thing you can taste, even faintly.

WHEN TO USE IT

When your thoughts are spinning and you cannot quite locate yourself. The body becomes the anchor.

Practice 03

Long-Exhale Breathing.

For an activated nervous system that needs a quiet, reliable signal of safety from the inside.

- 01 Breathe in gently through the nose for a count of four.
- 02 Breathe out slowly through the mouth, or a slightly parted jaw, for a count of eight.
- 03 Let the next inhale be small. Do not rush to fill the lungs.
- 04 Repeat for six to eight cycles. Notice the shoulders drop on their own.

WHY IT WORKS

A long exhale activates the vagus nerve and tells the body it is safe to slow down. The body believes the breath before it believes the thought.

Practice 04

Cold Water on the Wrists.

For acute panic or the kind of activation that feels too big for breathing alone to reach.

- 01 Go to a sink. Turn the water to cold, not freezing.
- 02 Run the water over the inside of your wrists for thirty to sixty seconds. You can also splash it on your face or hold a cold object in your hands.
- 03 Pay attention to the sensation. Let it become bigger than the thought.
- 04 When you turn the water off, take one slow breath before you do anything else.

WHY IT WORKS

Cold on the wrists or face triggers the mammalian dive reflex, which lowers heart rate and pulls the nervous system out of high alarm faster than thinking can.

Practice 05

Box Breathing Before a Hard Conversation.

For the minutes before something that matters — a meeting, a difficult call, a return to someone you love.

- 01* Breathe in for a count of four.
- 02* Hold gently for a count of four.
- 03* Breathe out for a count of four.
- 04* Hold gently for a count of four.
- 05* Repeat four to six times. Then ask yourself, very quietly:
what is the one thing I want this conversation to do?

WHEN TO USE IT

Right before you walk in the room. In the car. In the bathroom. In the hallway. Anywhere you can have ninety seconds to yourself.

Practice 06

Hand on the Heart, *Feet on the Floor.*

For lonely moments, late-night moments, or any time the body needs to be reminded it is not alone in itself.

- 01 Place one hand on your heart and the other on your belly.
- 02 Press your feet evenly into the floor or the bed. Let the support be felt.
- 03 Breathe gently and let the rhythm of your hands rise and fall with the breath.
- 04 Say something kind to yourself, silently. Something you would say to someone you love who was scared.

WHY IT WORKS

Warm, intentional touch releases oxytocin and signals safety. You can co-regulate with yourself when no one else is in the room.

Practice 07

Naming the *Need* Underneath.

For the kind of feeling that does not seem to have a name, or has too many names at once.

- 01 Notice the feeling. Do not try to solve it yet. Just say to yourself: *I am noticing something.*
- 02 Ask, gently: what does my body feel like right now? Tight, warm, heavy, fast, frozen, small?
- 03 Ask: what might this feeling be asking for? Rest. Reassurance. Honesty. Space. Connection. Safety. Play.
- 04 Choose one small thing in the direction of that need. Not the whole solution. Just one step toward it.

A NOTE

Most hard feelings are not problems to fix. They are signals pointing toward something underneath that needs care.

Practice 08

Permission to Pause.

The smallest practice. The one that makes all the others possible.

- 01 Stop what you are doing.
- 02 Put both feet on the floor.
- 03 Take one slow breath.
- 04 Say, out loud or quietly: *I am allowed to pause.*
- 05 Then choose what comes next.

WHY IT MATTERS

The pause is the practice. Healing is not a sprint. The body learns safety from a thousand small moments of being allowed to slow down.

WHERE TO GO FROM HERE

Keep these close. Use them *often*.

Healing happens in the small returns. The more you use these practices, the more your body will trust them, and the faster they will work when you need them most.

If you would like steadier support, deeper language, or a thinking partner for the road ahead, there are a few doors open.

WAYS TO CONTINUE

Private consultation

doctorfab.org · "Start Here"

The Healing Sanctuary

Practices & resources between sessions

The Inner Lexicon

Better words for hard things

Workshops & speaking

Schools, teams, & community groups

If you are in a crisis: This guide is not a substitute for emergency care. If you are in immediate danger in the United States, please call or text **988**, or call **911**.

