



Master your emotions:

Regulate your emotions through
your body

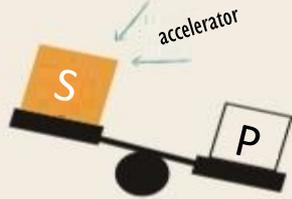
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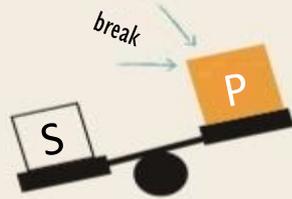
These may be alarm signals of
dysregulation of mood and body!

Our body is born to have capability for self-adjustment and self-recovery. The **autonomic nervous system** of the human body consists of sympathetic nervous system and parasympathetic nervous system. One of them is responsible for regulating physical activities while the other is regulating our rest. The two systems can operate independently while complementing with each other. Under normal circumstances, when the sympathetic system is activated, the parasympathetic system will slow down. This may enable us to act and rest interchangeably so as to maintain a balanced body and mind, and stabilize our emotions.

Sympathetic nervous system (S): Stepping on the accelerator pedal to provide energy for physical activities. **Parasympathetic nervous system (P):** Braking to regulate our rest for restoration and replenishment of energy.



Sympathetic nervous system:
Stepping on the accelerator pedal



Parasympathetic nervous system:
Braking to regulate our rest



For instance, sympathetic nerves will be activated to accelerate our heart rate, respiration and perspiration so as to provide the necessary energy when we exercise. When we stop exercising, parasympathetic nerves will replenish our energy by slowing down our heart rate, respiration, and perspiration.

Similarly, when we are driving, we need to step on the accelerator pedal to proceed and brake to stop. If we are stepping on the accelerator pedal too quickly or braking too fast, it will topple the car, or damage the car parts. If we are acting too slowly, the car may not have sufficient power to decelerate or may not be able to brake timely.

Likewise, it is necessary for us to act and rest in a timely manner, so as to maintain our body and mind balance.



However, as modern lifestyle is fast-paced and often filled with abnormal diet and busy routines, which results in an overexcited autonomic nervous system with symptoms such as being agitated, restless or impulsive. Receiving too many external stimuli in a short time may even overload the nervous system, like causing a temporary “crash” in a computer. People may also have the misconception that taking a rest means an immediate “shutdown”. They may stop all activities, resulting in tiredness, depression, loss of motivation, and so on. Below are some simple exercises that may help us to relax effectively and stabilize our emotions by gradually regaining equilibrium physically and mentally. Let’s spare some time to do the following exercises.

Basic principles of doing the exercises:

- Adjust the frequency and duration of exercise based on personal needs. Beginners are advised to **practice once a day for around 3 minutes.**
- Observe how your body feels or changes before and after the exercise (e.g. feeling comfortable or uncomfortable, cold or warm, relaxed or tense, etc.) to strengthen your self-awareness
- If you are feeling:
 - comfortable, you may continue with the exercise
 - uncomfortable, you may pause/stop
 - the same/unsure, you may attempt to continue or pause



Relaxation exercises

Let's Try!

Let your entire body relax:

Full-body relaxation ("dry shower")

Scan and Go!



This exercise is designed with reference to movements of taking a shower. Please perform this exercise in a quiet and relaxing place.



1 Preparation: relax the joints



2 Shower (pat lightly or massage the entire body, avoid fragile parts of the body, e.g. thorax, abdomen, etc.)



3 Apply soap (rub your hands till they get warm, and then massage or rub the entire body with moderate force and speed)



4 Wipe the body (rub the entire body again with your hands softly and slowly)



5 Finish: step out of the shower (step with your heels for around 2 to 3 times)

The above exercises have taken reference from theories in Bodydynamic Analysis and Somatic Fitness.

Scan and Go!



Let your mind relax

(Massage different areas of your scalp lightly with your fingertips just like washing your hair, repeat 5 to 6 times for each area)



1. Pull your ears upwards to align your neck and head



2. Front (area near the hairline)



3. Midsection (top of the head)



4. Rear (rub up and down lightly with your fists at around 45 degrees)



5. Sides (areas on top of the ears)



6. Massage the midpoint between the head of eyebrows and the eyes lightly

Balance between body and mind: starts with your posture

Maintaining a good posture will not only improve our musculoskeletal system, but also enhance our strength and reduce emotional instability. Many research studies have shown that body postures and emotions interact with each other. In other words, body postures can affect emotions, and vice versa.



Flaccid muscles may lead to such emotional states as being frustrated and depressed.



Excessive tensed body muscles may lead to such emotional states as feeling nervous and hypervigilant.



Maintain a good posture in our daily life as far as possible. It may help us strike a balance between body and mind, and become more emotionally stable.



Stand straight
(straight line principle)



Sit with a peace of mind (90/90 principle)

Sit on a chair with your back against the seatback (your back, pelvis and calves forming 90 degrees as far as possible) with your feet on the ground to feel the support.

Making good use of your five senses



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You can relax your body in daily life through appropriate sensory activities, such as:

Eyes (sight):
•landscapes, buildings, plants and animals, picture books, etc.

Ears (hearing):
•music, sounds of nature, etc.

Mouth (taste):
•Different flavors of food or drinks

Nose (smell):
•fragrance of flowers, essential oils, food, etc.

Skin (touch):
body massage, bubble bath, etc.



**consolidated from various psycho-somatic theories (including Bodynamic Analysis, Somatic Experiencing and Somatic Fitness), the above information is for reference only and should not be taken as a substitute for professional assessment and treatment. Please seek assistance from professionals (such as social workers, psychologists and doctors, etc.) if necessary.

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