

Move & Play the Stress Away



Downloadable resources:



Authors: Dr Iva Klimesova,
Dr Julie Wittmannová,
Kamil Maciaszek, Zsuzsa Illés,
Dr Éva Virág Suhajda
Editor: Dr Éva Virág Suhajda
Illustrations: Martyna Buda

Created as part of the Move and Play the Stress Away project
(project ID: 2023-1-PL01-KA220-SCH-000158084)



Playful Parents © 2025 is licensed
under Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0
International



Co-funded by
the European Union

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.



MY SOURCES/MY STRESSORS

Draw easy body shape “gingerbread man”

Write inside the body:

1. Sources that charge you at work, give you energy, pleasure, satisfaction (activities/ moments/ events)

Write outside the body:

1. Activities/ moments/ events that drain you at work, take your energy, stress you
2. Reflect: What sources/ stresses do you encounter most often?
3. Share your thoughts!

PHASES OF MY PROFESSIONAL CAREER: LOOK FROM AFAR

Draw graph, horizontal line divide into months of school year, vertical line is % of stress (0–100%)

1. Record on a chart how you are doing with stress in each month of the school year, mark 3-5 highlights and describe.
2. Reflect: Can I learn from the chart? Can I reduce stress, adjust activities or prepare?
3. Share! Draw the chart for the energy instead of stress



HOW TO PREVENT STRESS

1. Follow the principles of psychohygiene
2. Notice where your head is
3. Take an undisturbed moment for yourself every day
4. Don't try to handle everything by yourself and perfectly
5. Try to relax before going to bed
6. Don't be afraid to say that something isn't working for you
7. Contact an expert





CALM THE MIND

Imagine 3 things that make you happy

- Realize you have a right to feel uncomfortable sometimes
- Tell yourself the unpleasant feelings will go away
 - List 3 qualities you value in yourself
- Remember you have already managed a lot and I can do this too
- Think about the people you like and are important to you

WARNING SIGNS OF BURNOUT

1. Deep exhaustion that won't go away
2. Losing track of tasks
3. Failure to meet deadlines
4. Mood swings (irritability, sadness, anger)
5. Depression, hopelessness
6. Loss of interest in hobbies
7. Dislike and apathy towards work
8. Poor sleep quality, insomnia
9. Increased alcohol intake
10. Physical manifestations – head/stomach-aches, dizziness, frequent illness





ALL THE SMALL THINGS

Instead of getting annoyed with your children or students during moments of play, try and draw inspiration from them:

- if you see it's raining, put on some rain-boots and jump on the puddles!
- this is just one of the many examples of playful moments to be embraced.

WORK HARD, PLAY HARDER

Sometimes after having a hard time at work,
you just want to sit down and relax:

- for some variety, try and introduce an engaging activity like musical chairs;
- during a longer break, grab some of your colleagues, set up a few chairs and put on some music. Relaxing can be fun!



MEMORY LANE

Take at least 10 minutes to connect with your childhood memories:

- sit or lie down in a quiet spot;
- close your eyes and take a deep breath;
- try to recall one of your favourite places to play;
 - consider the 5 senses;
- when you're ready open your eyes and draw what you imagined;
- share this experience with your friends or even your children.





PAUSE FOR A MOMENT

Close your eyes and think of one thing that made you happy today. What was it? How did it make you feel? What did that moment look like? Hold onto that feeling in your heart and remember that small moments build your everyday life.

THAT ONE SPECIAL PERSON

Think of one person you are grateful for.
What do you value most about them?
How do they impact your life? Could you
show it to them today? Gratitude is a bridge
between hearts and strengthens
relationships, even when expressed
silently in thought.



SMALL SUCCESSES

Name three things you did well today.

They can be small but meaningful.

How does that make you feel?

Celebrate yourself for every step, and
remember that success is built from tiny,
daily achievements.





STARGAZER'S BREATH

Escape the day's worries. Find a quiet spot at night. Gaze at a twinkling star, breathe in deeply, filling your lungs with cool air.

As another star catches your eye, exhale slowly, letting stress drift away with each breath. Repeat, feeling the vastness of the universe calm your mind and spirit.



MOONLIT MEDITATION

Dim the lights and find a comfortable position. Close your eyes and imagine cool moonlight bathing you in its gentle glow. Breathe deeply, feeling the air fill your lungs. With each exhale, visualize all your worries melting away, carried by the moonlight. Let go of tension, and allow yourself to be enveloped by serenity.

SUNRISE WALK

Start your day with a dose of nature's calm.

Step outside and take a mindful walk.

Let the sunrise paint the sky with vibrant colors, feel the sun's gentle warmth on your skin, and listen to the sweet melody of birdsong. Immerse yourself in the beauty of the morning, allowing your worries to fade with the night.



FOREST BATHING

Immerse yourself in nature's embrace. Take a slow, mindful walk in a park, forest, or any natural space that calls to you. Breathe deeply, feeling the cool air fill your lungs. Notice the ground beneath your feet, the feel of soft earth or crunchy leaves. Don't judge the sights and sounds around you - simply observe the rustling leaves, the chirping birds, the dancing sunlight. Allow nature's symphony to wash over you, letting stress and worries fade away with each step.



INDOOR GARDEN ZEN

Bring a touch of nature indoors!

Nurture a small plant and create a calming space. Repot it with fresh soil, feeling its texture in your hands. Water it gently, observing how the water nourishes new life.

Take a moment each day to simply observe its growth - a new leaf unfurling, a bud forming. Focus on the calming routine of care and witness its quiet resilience that inspires growth and peace within yourself.





DESKTOP PLANETARIUM

Download a relaxing space soundscape and project calming images of planets or nebulae on your ceiling. Breathe deeply and let go of worries. Enjoy the peace and tranquility of your own personal planetarium whenever you need.



NATURE'S MANDALA

Embrace nature's artistry! Gather colorful leaves, petals, or smooth stones. Find a quiet spot and arrange them in a pleasing pattern, like a mandala. As you create, focus on the calming rhythm of your breath and the beauty of the natural world and find peace in the present moment.



5 TIPS TO START EATING MINDFULLY

Pause before you eat. Notice your hunger level. Take small bites. Chew slowly. Tune into taste, texture, and fullness. Eating mindfully starts with one bite at a time – be present, not perfect.



PRACTICE MINDFU – EATING WITH TASTE

T – Think about if you are eating due to hunger or emotions

A – Appreciate the time, energy, and resources that went in to your meal

S – Eat Slowly. Chew multiple times and put down your fork in between bites

T – Take your Time to enjoy the flavours of your meal

E – End your meal when you feel satisfied, not stuffed. This might not always mean a perfectly clean plate!

GRATITUDE LIST

Here we offer an exercise to encourage mindfulness, to intentionally focus on the positive aspects of our lives, and to find joy in the little things:

Reflect: Take a moment each day to think about positive aspects of your life.

Write It Down: List at least three things you're grateful for.

Feel It: Imagine the positive emotions associated with each item.

Repeat daily for a more positive mindset!



MY OWN POSITIVE AFFIRMATIONS

Focus Area: Choose an aspect of your life you want to improve. It could be related to confidence, health, relationships, or any other aspect.

Desired Outcome: Define what positive change you want.

Ideal Self: Imagine your best self and use it as inspiration.

Kind Language: Be compassionate in your affirmation.

Consistency: Repeat daily for lasting impact!





5 TIPS FOR ADVANCED MINDFUL EATERS

Slow Down: Chew slowly, savor flavors, and pay attention

Listen to Hunger: Eat when hungry, stop when satisfied

No Distractions: Focus on your meal, no screens

Appreciate Food: Consider its origin and value

Practice Gratitude: Thank your meal



5 AFFIRMATIONS THAT WORK INSTANTLY

I am worthy of respect and acceptance.

My challenges help me grow.

I am brimming with energy and health.

I am a positive influence on others.

I allow myself to feel good.

BODY SCAN

Find a quiet spot. Close your eyes and take a deep breath. Gently focus your attention on your toes. Squeeze your toes tight for a few seconds, feeling the tension rise. Then, slowly release, letting go of any tightness.

Notice the wave of relaxation flow upwards through your feet and ankles. Repeat this process, moving your awareness progressively up your body: calves, knees, thighs, hips, etc.

Continue through your core, back, chest, shoulders, arms, neck, and finally, your face. With each release, feel tension melt away, leaving you calm and centered.



CHAIR YOGA BREATH

Sit tall in a chair, feeling grounded and centered. Inhale deeply, raise your arms overhead, imagining a thin golden thread connecting your head with the sky. Feel your spine lengthen and chest open. As you exhale, gently fold forward from your hips, reaching for the ground. Feel your spine lengthen and release any tension. Breathe deeply and slowly with each movement, allowing worries to leave with each exhale.

Repeat this gentle flow, connecting with your breath a couple times till it feels good.





POWER POSE

Stand tall with your feet shoulder-width apart, shoulders back, chin up, and arms raised overhead in a victory pose. Hold strong for 2 minutes, feeling the power surge through you. Imagine this pose expanding your presence and confidence.



4-7-8 BREATHING

Inhale for 4 seconds. Hold for 7 seconds.
Exhale for 8 seconds. Repeat 4 times.



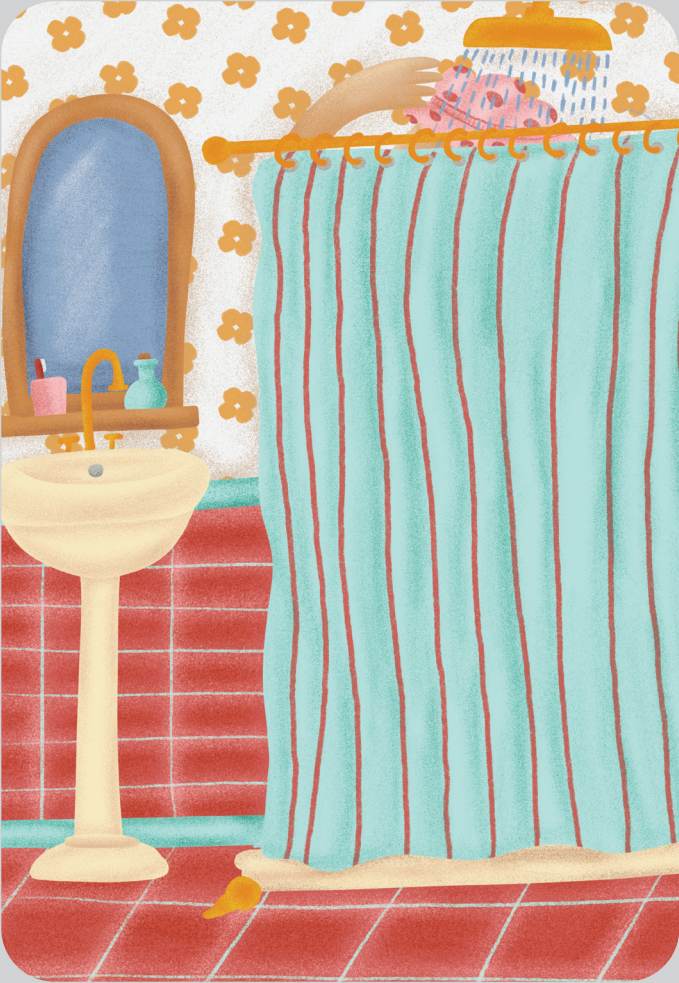
EFT - TAPPING ON

Choose a specific situation or feeling that causes you stress.

Repeat the following phrase while tapping on each point: “Even though I feel [your emotion], I deeply and completely accept myself.”

Tap through all the points several times.

Notice how you feel after the exercise.



SHOWER YOUR STRESS AWAY

Pay attention to the sensations of the water on your skin. Notice the temperature, the pressure, and the way it feels.

Wash your body with intention, feel the soap lathering on your skin and the gentle scrubbing motion on each part of your body.

Close your eyes and take slow, deep breaths.

Take a moment to express gratitude for the opportunity to cleanse your body and mind.

MY MORNING SUN

Imagine a soft, warm sunbeam gently kissing your eyelids. As you inhale, feel its warmth penetrate your skin, filling you with energy and vitality. With each exhale, let go of any tension or stress, releasing it into the air.

Visualize yourself bathed in this golden light, feeling refreshed and rejuvenated. As you awaken, carry this sense of peace and positivity with you throughout the day.



PINECONES, PASTA AND PAINT – OH MY!

If you see any pinecones lying on the ground while on a walk, or if you have any left-over pasta grab them, some paint and a piece of paper;

- using only these materials paint you interpretation of “rest” or stress”;
- encourage your colleagues to try it too!



NO PEEKING SELF-PORTRAIT

All you need for this challenge is a piece of paper, tape and something to write with.

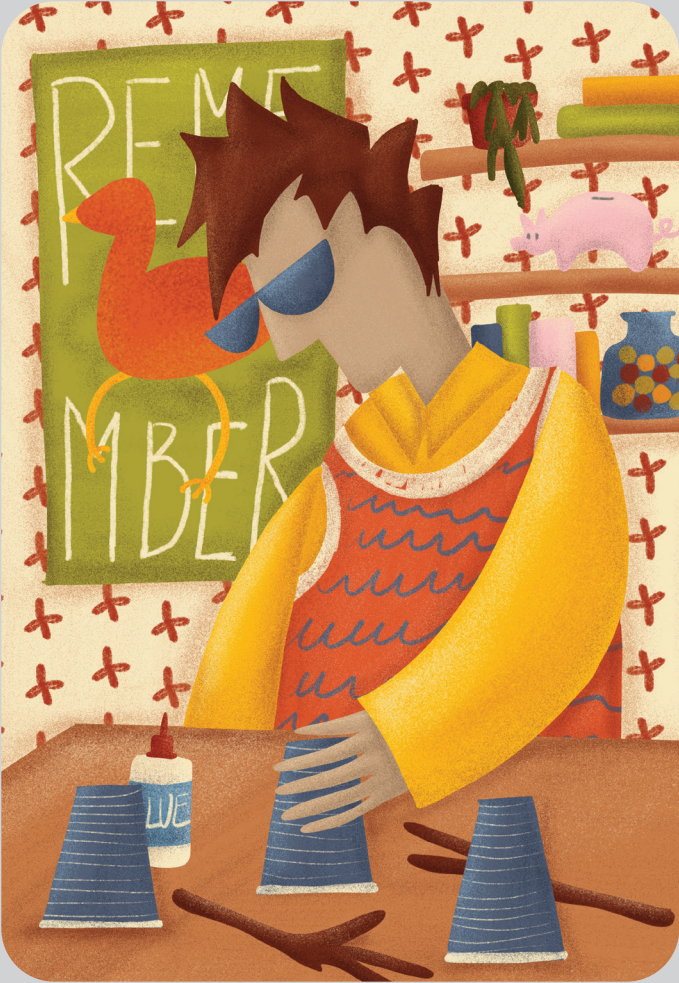
- Take a blank sheet of paper and tape it to your forehead;
- next, try and draw a self-portrait;
- try not to be so hard on yourself – we can all be artists!



DIY BIRDHOUSE

While on a walk or while you're cleaning the house, explore what materials you have lying around that could be made suitable for a birdhouse;

- after gathering these things, make a birdhouse to release some stress;
- hang it up at work in a place where you will be able to observe it throughout the day.



DOODLE YOUR FEELINGS

Grab a pen and a scrap of paper. Without thinking, doodle for two minutes. Let your hand flow freely. What shapes or patterns emerge? How do they reflect your current mood? Creativity often begins with playful spontaneity.





STORY IN ONE SENTENCE

Create a one-sentence story about today.

What would its title be?

A dash of storytelling helps us notice and reframe moments, big or small, with creativity and purpose.

REIMAGINE THE ORDINARY

Choose an everyday object around you.
What else could it be? A book becomes a
stepping stone, a mug becomes a treasure
chest. Playful creativity transforms how
you see the world and shifts your energy.



ALTERNATE PERSPECTIVES

Look at your space or a challenge from a new angle. Imagine how a child, an artist, or even your favorite fictional character would see it. Changing perspective unlocks creative solutions and ideas.

