

STRESS!

Do you recognize the signs?

Listen to your body

Sometimes the signs are unmistakable. Your heartbeat goes up, your hands get sweaty, or your mind goes blank. In other cases, it is more subtle. It creeps up on you and unnoticeably impacts your body. I'm talking about those moments that you hold your breath that you tighten the grip on your mouse. When you simply forget to pay attention to how you sit or stand. About those times, you are so preoccupied that you are unaware (or oblivious) of what is happening in your body.

It's a shame that these moments can pass by unnoticed. That we ignore the signals our body is giving us. Warnings that we are unconsciously under more pressure than we thought. Enough reason to stop, feel, and notice what is happening within our body.

That's why I created the following. This exercise will help you uncover the areas in your body you tend to store stress. This way, you can become aware, give it the attention it deserves and release it.

Step 1: Scan yourself from head to toe

In this exercise, it is essential to realize that you do not have to change anything. The goal is to simply listen to your body and deeply experience your sensations.

Sit down or lie down in a comfortable position. First, take a few slow breaths and double-check that you feel at ease. If so, close your eyes and start scanning your body. Start at the crown, and from there, examine your body bit by bit; your forehead, eyebrows, eyes, ears, nose, cheeks,...

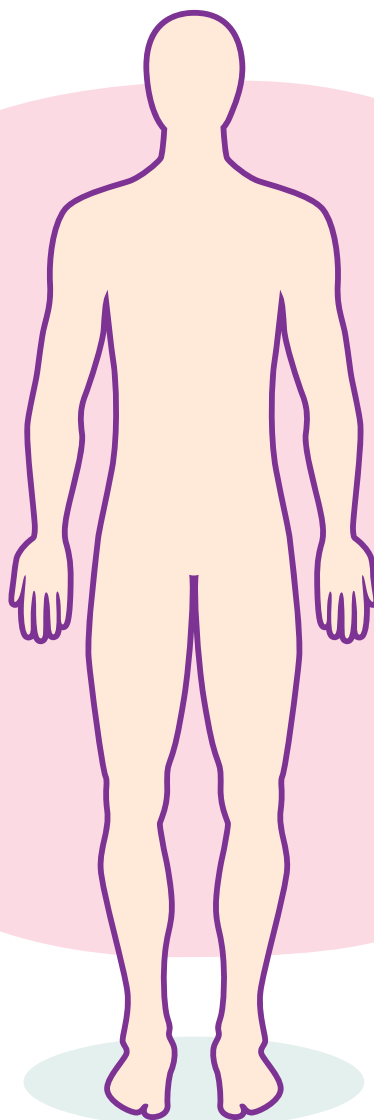
It is no problem if you get distracted. If so, return to where you left off and continue scanning from there.

Observe every spot you scanned. Do this without judgment. What do you notice in terms of temperature, heaviness, tension, or other sensations? Discover which parts of your body feel comfortable and which feel less pleasant. Scan your body back and forth, top to bottom a few times at your own pace. When you are ready, take another deep breath and open your eyes.

Step 2: Identify tension

An option is to indicate your body's parts where you experience more tension or have a less comfortable feeling. Do this by marking those parts in the figure below.

If you do this several times over a more extended period, you find out which parts of your body need more attention.



Step 3: Breathe and shake it off

If you want to take it a step further and pay more attention to your body's points of attention that you discovered during the scans, you can do this by using the following exercises.

Exercise 1

Sit or lie down again in a comfortable way and put your hand on the spot where you often experience tension or stress. If necessary, close your eyes and breathe towards this spot four times. Try breathing in for four counts, holding your breath for two counts, and then breathing out for four counts.

Then put your hand on the next spot you want to give more attention to and repeat the breathing exercise.

Exercise 2

Another way to pay attention to those places where you hold tension is to give them a good shake. And now I hear you thinking, but how do I shake my cheeks, kneecaps, or neck? I promise you; I tried everything. I've succeeded, and I'm confident you will too!

Good luck with listening, breathing, and shaking!