🌿 Somatic Exercises for Emotional Regulation

Reconnecting your body and mind when emotions feel overwhelming

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🧠 Why Somatic Exercises Work

When you're anxious, overwhelmed, or emotionally shut down, your nervous system goes into **survival mode**—fight, flight, or freeze.
Somatic (body-based) exercises help you **regulate from the bottom up** by calming your body first, which then helps your mind catch up.
These are simple movements and sensations that can:
✅ Slow your heart rate
✅ Reconnect you to the present moment
✅ Release tension
✅ Soothe your nervous system

🔄 Try These Somatic Tools Anytime You Feel Dysregulated

🫁 1. 3-Part Grounding Breath

- Inhale deeply into your belly for 4 counts
- Hold for 4 counts
- Exhale slowly for 6–8 counts
- Repeat 3–5 times, focusing on the rise and fall of your belly

Why it helps: Calms the vagus nerve and signals safety to your body.

🦶 2. Feet on the Floor + Push Down

- Sit upright and plant your feet firmly on the ground
- Press your feet into the floor as if rooting into it
- Gently press your hands into your thighs or the chair arms
- Feel the support beneath you

Why it helps: Grounding through the lower body reconnects you to the here-and-now and reduces floating or "checked out" feelings.

🧊 3. Temperature Reset (TIPP skill)

- Splash cold water on your face
- Hold an ice cube
- Use a cold compress on your neck or wrists

Why it helps: Activates the dive reflex, which slows heart rate and regulates extreme emotions fast.

🦋 4. Butterfly Hug

- Cross your arms over your chest and place your hands just below your collarbones
- Gently tap your hands left–right–left–right, like butterfly wings
- Breathe slowly as you do this

Why it helps: Bilateral stimulation can help you self-soothe and process intense feelings.

🫀 5. Shake It Off (Literally)

- Stand up and shake your hands, arms, legs, shoulders
- Bounce gently on your feet for 15–30 seconds
- Let out a sigh or exhale through your mouth

Why it helps: Releases excess energy and tension stored in the body—just like animals do after stress.

🧘 6. Progressive Muscle Release (Mini Version)

- Clench your fists tightly for 5 seconds, then release
- Shrug your shoulders to your ears, hold, then drop
- Tighten your legs or stomach, then let go
- Breathe as you relax each area

Why it helps: Teaches your body the difference between tension and relaxation.

📝 Reflection Prompt (Optional)

Which 1 or 2 exercises helped you feel most grounded or calm? Why?

What's one you could practice daily, even when you're not overwhelmed?

🧰 Make Your Own Somatic Toolbox

Create a list of **5 physical actions or sensations** that help calm you down or bring you back to your body when you're overwhelmed.

My Somatic Go-Tos

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