

Somatic Tracking Exercise

Patient Information	
Why should I do this exercise?	<p>Remember that pain (or anxiety, nausea, or dizziness) is your brain’s alarm signal. When you do this exercise mindfully, it is teaching your brain that the pain or distress is not dangerous to you, and that you are safe and in control of the situation.</p> <p>By simply examining the painful sensations without emotion, your brain is learning that the pain or discomfort is nothing to be afraid of, and without the fear, the pain loses its power.</p> <p>The goal of the exercise is not to get rid of the pain. In fact, the more you try to get rid of the pain, the more you are telling your danger-alarm mechanism that you are in trouble, and the more likely it is to continue to run the alarm pathway of pain, anxiety, or discomfort. The goal of the exercise is to teach your brain that it is safe and in no danger, but you don’t care whether the pain changes, or gets better or worse while you are tracking it.</p>
When should I do this exercise?	<p>Practice this exercise when pain, distress or negative sensations or thoughts happen any time during the day. When you find yourself using your normal avoidance strategies to get away from the pain or distress you are feeling, take just 2-3 minutes and do a somatic tracking exercise to mindfully explore and examine your pain or discomfort. (You can then go ahead and do your avoidance strategy if needed.)</p>
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<p>When you notice pain, distress, or other negative thoughts, take two minutes (or more if you like):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Notice it with interest, maybe even with a little curiosity, but with no emotional reactivity. Almost like a hiker who reached the top of a ridge and is just looking at the landscape on the other side with interest. Pay attention to how the pain moves around or changes in quality but do so without emotion. 2. Accept it as happening right now but realize that this thought or body sensation is transient and caused by the brain. Say to yourself “It’s just a thought, a sensation, or neurons firing.” 3. Remind yourself that since these are just sensations, they are not in any way threatening to you. These sensations are not dangerous and cannot harm you. 4. Tell yourself “I don’t need to do anything about this right now because this is not harmful, and it will pass.” 5. Tell yourself: “I’m okay. I’ll be fine. There is actually nothing wrong with my [back/head/stomach/chest] because I am healthy and strong.” Or say “I am safe, and there is no danger from these nerve impulses. I am safe. I am not in danger.” 	