

Tune Up Your Brain, Module Two

The S.T.O.P. Meditation

This is a great meditation to use when you are having one of those days where your mind is hopping all over the place or you're worried about things in the past or the future.

This is very helpful for getting back into the present moment so that you can gain some perspective on events or people. That will help you regulate your response to pressure, and let your parasympathetic nervous system take over to reduce the effects of stress.

The whole point of this is to reduce those stress hormones that are so troublesome for our brain and our body.

So, create the time and space in your day to S.T.O.P. and come down from that worried mind.

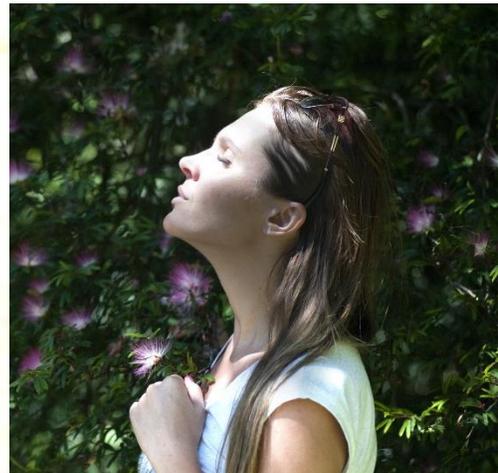
S = Stop

Stop what you're doing; put things down for a minute. Stand up and breathe. Feel your connection to the earth.

T = Take

Take a few deep breaths. Follow your breath coming in and out of your nose. You can even say to yourself "in" as you're breathing in and "out" as you're breathing out if that helps with concentration.

Tune in to your body. Lower your gaze. Scan your body and notice physical sensations or emotions. Discharge any unpleasant sensations, emotions, or feelings on the out breath. Notice any pleasant ones and let them fill you up on the in breath.



O = Observe



Lift your eyes and take in your surroundings. Observe something in your environment that is pleasant and be grateful for it and its beauty.

Observe your experience just as it is—including thoughts, feelings, and emotions. You can reflect about what is on your mind and notice that thoughts are not facts, and they are not permanent. Notice any emotions that are present and how they're being expressed in your body.

P = Proceed

Proceed by taking three big breaths, and say to yourself, “Clear head, calm body, relax.”

You should be in a calmer state now, able to stop reacting to whatever is happening.

A Perfect Breather

There are probably many opportunities in the day for you to just S.T.O.P. —waking up in the morning, taking a shower, before eating a meal, at a stop light, before sitting down at work and checking email. Besides helping to calm the mind, this practice is perfect when you need to focus.

Imagine what it will feel like to not be reacting all the time!

Your brain will thank you.