



The Self-Care Survival Toolkit

3 Therapist-Approved Techniques to Relieve Pain, Settle Your Nervous System & Gently Re-Energise. No Props Required

by Marcelle

MR Remedial Massage

This information is for general wellbeing only and does not replace personalised medical advice. Please consult a healthcare professional for individual concerns.



Welcome

You know that feeling when your body's tired, but your mind won't slow down... or when everything aches and you've barely done anything?

That's not just being "a bit stressed." It's your nervous system asking for help. And the truth is, most of us were never taught how to actually listen to it.

In this toolkit, I'll walk you through three simple, powerful techniques I teach my clients when they want relief now, and don't have time, energy, or equipment.

Each tool is here to help you:

- Reconnect to your body in a gentle way
- Understand what your symptoms are telling you
- Feel more regulated, rested, and in control again

We go deeper into this work inside my Self-Care Essentials Course, but these are a beautiful place to start. Use one or all and notice what shifts.

Take your time. This isn't about fixing yourself. It's about caring for yourself the way you deserve.

With warmth,

Marcelle

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Disclaimer:

This toolkit is intended for general wellness support and educational purposes only. It does not take into account your personal medical history, conditions, or circumstances, and should not be used as a substitute for personalised medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. If you have ongoing symptoms, chronic pain, or specific health concerns, please consult a qualified health professional before trying these techniques.

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TOOL 1 – The Tension Sweep

(Body awareness + micro-release = subtle but powerful shift)

Why this matters:

Chronic tension isn't always caused by tight muscles, more often, it's a sign that your nervous system doesn't feel safe enough to let go. Stress, pain, overwhelm, and even poor posture can all trigger your body to tighten up in protective ways.

The thing is, most of us don't even realise we're holding tension until it turns into stiffness, fatigue, or pain.

These techniques gently teach your brain to notice where you're holding on, and to let go, even just a little. It's not about "fixing" your posture or forcing relaxation. It's about inviting safety back into the system.

With practice, you'll start to notice more quickly when your body is clenching and more importantly, you'll know what to do about it.

How to do it:

1. Find a comfortable position. Sit or lie down somewhere quiet. Let your hands rest in your lap or by your sides.
2. Soften your gaze or close your eyes. Take a slow breath in through your nose. Let your shoulders drop on the exhale.
3. Bring your attention to your forehead. Gently ask yourself, "Can I let this soften?"
4. Now begin the tension sweep. Slowly bring your awareness through your body like a warm light or soft breeze. Imagine tension melting as you pass through each area:

Forehead → eyes → jaw → neck → shoulders → chest → belly → hips → thighs → knees → calves → ankles → feet

5. As you scan each area, silently say: "Soften... let go..." or "You're safe now." Let the process take 1–2 minutes, or more if you need. Do 2–3 rounds if it feels good.

Optional: Place one hand over your chest or belly for a grounding sensation.

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What this does:

This activates your interoceptive pathways, the parts of your brain responsible for tracking internal sensations. These pathways are often dulled by stress, trauma, and disconnection, which is why many people don't notice tension until it's unbearable.

By gently tuning into your body (without judgement or forcing), you start to rebuild your sense of internal safety. This helps regulate your autonomic nervous system which means:

- Fewer spikes in stress or anxiety
- Less clenching in your jaw, shoulders or hips
- A deeper sense of calm and clarity

Clients often describe feeling "lighter," "more spacious," or "like they finally took a real breath," sometimes after just one sweep.

The more often you use this, the more your nervous system will start to treat safety as the new normal and that's where real healing begins.



TOOL 2 – 5-4-3-2-1 Sensory Reset

(Nervous system grounding technique for pain, panic, and overwhelm)

Why this matters:

When your body is in pain, panic, or burnout mode, it's often because your nervous system has shifted into survival, reacting to something as if it's dangerous, even if you logically know it's not.

This can happen in response to:

- A stressful email
- A crowded space
- A spike in pain or fatigue
- Feeling emotionally overwhelmed for “no reason”

In these moments, your brain isn't fully present. It's scanning for threat and keeping your body in fight, flight, or freeze mode, which can make symptoms feel worse.

This technique helps bring you back to the here and now using your senses which are some of the fastest, most powerful tools for calming the nervous system.

How to do it:

You can do this anywhere, standing in line, lying in bed, or sitting at your desk.

Take a slow breath in, and as you exhale, gently look around your environment.

Now name to yourself:

- 5 things you can see (colours, shapes, light)
- 4 things you can physically feel (your clothes, the chair, your feet on the floor)
- 3 things you can hear (near or far)
- 2 things you can smell (or remember a smell you love)
- 1 thing you can taste (or imagine the taste of something comforting)

Let this process be slow and curious, not rushed. You can whisper it aloud or think it silently, whatever feels more soothing.

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Example:

“I see the window. I see the shadows on the floor. I feel my jumper on my skin. I feel the air on my face. I hear birds outside. I hear the fridge humming. I smell my tea. I remember the smell of lavender. I taste mint from my toothpaste.”

If one of the senses is hard to access (especially smell or taste), that’s completely OK, just substitute a memory or something neutral. The point is to gently anchor your awareness into something real and safe.

What this does:

This tool works by shifting your brain out of its stress loops. It activates the prefrontal cortex, the reasoning, calming part of your brain, and reduces activity in the amygdala, your internal alarm system.

You’re reminding your nervous system:

“I’m here now. I’m safe. I can feel what’s around me.”

This is especially helpful when:

- You feel “dissociated” or zoned out.
- Your pain suddenly spikes and feels scary.
- You feel a wave of anxiety or irritation you can’t explain.
- You’re exhausted but can’t rest.
- You’re emotionally overwhelmed and just need to land.

In clinic, I use this often with clients who are feeling unsteady, flooded, or “stuck in their head.” After 1–2 rounds, there’s often a visible shift, breathing slows, muscles soften, and people say things like “I feel like I’m back in my body again.”

And that’s exactly the point: reconnecting, not escaping.

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TOOL 3 – Wave Breathing

(For gentle energy, posture awareness and lymphatic support)

Why this matters:

Your breath is more than just oxygen, it's a powerful tool for nervous system regulation, posture support, lymph flow, and even digestion. Best of all? It's always with you.

But here's the catch:

When you're stressed, tired, or in pain, your breath tends to become shallow, stuck high in the chest. Over time, this locked-up breathing pattern puts strain on your neck, shoulders, upper back, and even your jaw.

It can also contribute to fatigue, tension headaches, poor circulation, and a feeling of always being on edge.

Wave breathing retrains your body to breathe in a way that supports you, not just physically, but emotionally and energetically too.

How to do it:

1. Find a comfortable seat or lie down. Place one hand on your belly and one on your chest.
2. Inhale slowly through your nose. Imagine the breath filling you from the bottom up:
Belly expands → ribs widen → chest gently lifts
3. Exhale slowly through your mouth. Let the breath move in reverse:
Chest softens → ribs relax → belly deflates
4. Visualise this as a gentle wave rising on the inhale and falling on the exhale.
5. Let your shoulders drop each time you breathe out. Feel yourself settling.
6. Repeat for 6–10 slow breaths, or as long as it feels helpful.

Bonus tip: Try adding a gentle hum or soft sigh on each exhale.

This vibrational sound stimulates the vagus nerve, which plays a big role in calming your body's stress response. (And yes, it actually works.)

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What this does:

Wave breathing creates a cascade of small but powerful effects throughout your system:

- Encourages diaphragmatic breathing, improving oxygen uptake and reducing tension in the upper body.
- Stimulates lymph flow, especially around the gut and chest, helping your body detox and regulate fluid balance.
- Mobilises the spine and ribcage, gently releasing areas that tend to become stiff or locked when under stress.
- Activates your parasympathetic nervous system, your body's rest/digest mode, helping shift out of survival mode and into a calmer, more resourceful state

Clients often tell me things like:

"I didn't realise how shallow I was breathing," or

"After a few breaths, my back loosened, and my brain stopped racing."

This tool is one of the simplest, most effective things you can do for your body, and no one even needs to know you're doing it.



Reflection – What Did You Notice?

(Slowing down to listen to your body's response)

You've just explored three gentle but powerful tools for self-care, ones that don't rely on equipment, appointments, or willpower.
Even if you only tried one of them, that's a win.

Because this work isn't about doing it perfectly, it's about noticing what your body needs, and meeting it with care.

Take a moment now to reflect:

- What did you feel in your body after trying each technique?
Was there a shift in tension, energy, breath, or mood?
- What surprised you?
Was there something you didn't expect to feel? Or something you realised you were holding?
- Which tool felt easiest or most natural for you?
That might be a great one to keep coming back to — especially during stressful moments.
- Optional journaling prompt:
“When I slow down and listen to my body, I notice...”

You don't have to use all three tools every day. In fact, the magic is in learning to choose the one your body is asking for in the moment.

The more you practice this, the more your body learns that it's safe to relax, release, and repair, even during a busy life.

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What's Next – Deepen Your Self-Care Practice

You've just learned three simple tools to reconnect with your body, ease tension, and reset your energy. And if that felt supportive, even a little bit, imagine what's possible when you have a full system of care designed just for you.

That's exactly what I created the Self-Care Essentials Course for.

This course is for anyone who's tired of:

- Always putting their own needs last.
- Living in a body that feels stiff, sore or exhausted.
- Feeling like they should know how to look after themselves, but just... don't.

Inside the course, you'll learn how to:

- Understand what your pain, fatigue or tension are actually telling you.
- Build simple daily rituals that support your muscles, mood and nervous system.
- Create a sustainable self-care rhythm that doesn't rely on appointments, motivation or fancy gear.

You'll get guidance, not guilt. Tools that actually work. And permission to take up space in your own life.

- Want early access + waitlist-only bonuses?
- Be the first to know when doors open:

👉 [Join the Waitlist] (insert link)

Take care of you,
Marcelle x
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