

MICRO Self-Care: quick and easy practices that can be used throughout the day, for relaxation, energizing, or grounding purposes.

PURPOSE	PRACTICE
Relaxation	Ease on Down the Road - Progressively tense the 4 major muscle groups for 5 seconds and then relax for 10 seconds. Starting with your lower limbs and feet, moving to your chest and abdomen, then to your shoulders and arms, and ending with your neck and face. As you relax, say a cue word or phrase such as <i>relax</i> or <i>I release</i> or <i>it's okay</i> , and notice feelings of relaxation enter your muscles. Repeat the cycle of tense and release twice before you move on to the next muscle group.
Relaxation	Wring It Out - Sit upright in a chair. Slowly and gently twist your body to the right from your hips to your head. Turn as far to the right as you can, using the chair handle to help you turn further if you wish. Hold for 10 seconds or longer, allowing your muscles to relax and stretch. Add an extra stretch with a deep inhale, letting your chest expand. Then exhale as you come back to the front. Then repeat this process to the left. As you wring yourself and exhale, imagine that you're a sponge that's absorbed events throughout your day and you are now squeezing out this sponge. Take a moment to notice how your body feels after you twist. Once you're done, shake your arms in front of you as you release the day's work.
Energizing	Circle of Care - Take a circular object (such as a stone), hold it in your hand and say, "I'm part of a vast circle of helpers around the globe." As you say this, close your eyes and imagine helpers and healers in your city, country, and in countries around the world and your connection to this larger web of people.
Energizing	Doorknob Confession - Think to yourself, <i>I do this work because</i> _____. (Examples: to help people, to understand yourself better, to make a difference in the world, because it's interesting). Get in touch with your motivation before every client/work encounter.
Energizing	Cross Crawl – March in place, knees high, arms swinging, crossing your right elbow to your left knee and your left elbow to your right knee. You can also add the words <i>I am awake and ready</i> to the practice.
Grounding	Imagine That - Close your eyes and imagine yourself in a favorite, happy, peaceful place. It could be a real place that you remember or a fantasy place. Summon as many aspects of the place as possible, including sounds, smells, temperature, tastes, and visual details. Enjoy this image for a minute or two.
Grounding	"Strong back, soft front" - pull your belly button towards your spine and straighten your back, imagining a string pulling you up from the top of your head. Then take a deep belly breath, relaxing your stomach outward and mentally softening towards the other person.
Grounding	One-minute meditation – using a timer, do 1 minute of breathing. On each in-breath, think, <i>I am calm</i> and on the out-breath, think, <i>I am grounded</i> . Add background nature sounds from a sound app if you wish.
Grounding	4-7-8 Breath/Diaphragmatic breathing - Inhale for the count of 4, hold your breath for the count of 7, and exhale your breath as if blowing out through a straw to the count of 8. This is repeated three times.

From the article: **Little and Often: Using Micro-Practices for Self-Care**, By Ashley Davis Bush, Psychotherapy Networker, May/June 2015