



# INSTANT CALMING SEQUENCE

Stressed? Feeling panicked? Follow these six steps to calm your body the instant you begin to feel stress. Print out the handy wallet cards to take with you wherever you go.

## STEP 1

Practice uninterrupted breathing. When stress strikes, immediately focus on your breath and continue breathing smoothly, deeply and evenly.

## STEP 2

Put on a positive face. Smile a grin that you can feel in the corners of your eyes. The conventional wisdom is that happiness triggers smiling. But studies suggest that this process is a two-way street. Smiling can contribute to feelings of happiness, and in a stressful situation, it can help keep you calm. Try this simple test: Smile a broad grin right now. Don't you feel better?

## STEP 3

Balance your posture. People under stress often look hunched-over; hence the oft-repeated phrase "They have the weight of the world on their shoulders."

Maintaining upright posture works like smiling. Physical balance contributes to emotional balance. Keep your head up, chin in, chest high; pelvis and hips level, back comfortably straight and abdomen free of tension. Imagine a string lifting your body from a point at the center of the top of your head.

## STEP 4

Bathe in a wave of relaxation. Consciously sweep a wave of relaxation through your body. Imagine you're standing under a gentle waterfall that washes away all your tension.

## STEP 5

Acknowledge reality. Face the cause of stress head-on. Don't try to deny it or wish that it wasn't happening. Think: "This is real. I can handle it. I'm finding the best possible way to cope right now."

## STEP 6

Reassert control. Instead of fretting about how the stressor has robbed you of control, focus on what you **can** control and take appropriate action. Also, think clear-headed, honest thoughts instead of distorted ones.

**Instant Calming sequence**  
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2. Smile a grin that you can feel in the corners of your eyes  
3. Balance your posture  
4. Bathe in a wave of relaxation  
5. Acknowledge reality — "This is real. I can handle it. I'm finding the best possible way to cope right now."  
6. Focus on what you can control and take action

INTEGRATIVE PSYCHIATRY

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