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SOMATIC JOURNAL

A GUIDE TO MIND-BODY AWARENESS ! 

INCLUDES 7 EASY SOMATIC EXERCISES FOR A
HEALTHIER MIND AND BODY!

What is a Somatic Journal?

A somatic journal is a powerful tool for exploring the intricate connection between your mind and body. The word "somatic" comes from the Greek word "soma," meaning "body." By engaging in somatic journaling, you're embarking on a journey to understand how your physical sensations relate to your thoughts, emotions, and overall well-being.

Unlike traditional journaling, which often focuses primarily on thoughts and feelings, a somatic journal encourages you to tune into your body's wisdom. It invites you to notice and record physical sensations, tensions, and energy patterns, and to explore how these relate to your mental and emotional states.

The practice of somatic journaling can help you:

- ✓ Develop greater body awareness
- ✓ Identify and release stored tensions or emotions
- ✓ Understand the physical manifestations of stress or anxiety
- ✓ Cultivate a deeper sense of presence and mindfulness
- ✓ Enhance your overall emotional intelligence and self-understanding



This guide will walk you through the process of creating and maintaining your own somatic journal, starting with an initial deep exploration phase, followed by a daily routine, and concluding with a collection of additional prompts for ongoing practice.

Remember, somatic journaling is a personal practice that can evolve over time. Feel free to adapt these prompts or create your own as you become more attuned to your body's wisdom. The key is to approach your practice with curiosity, compassion, and a willingness to listen deeply to the messages your body is sending.

By consistently engaging with your somatic journal, you'll develop a richer understanding of your mind-body connection, leading to greater self-awareness, emotional regulation, and overall well-being.





PART 1

Initial Deep Exploration

Initial Deep Exploration



Before diving into daily practice, it's important to establish a baseline understanding of your current mind-body connection. This initial exploration will help you become more attuned to your body's signals and sensations.

EXERCISE 1: BODY SCAN MEDITATION

Find a quiet, comfortable space where you won't be disturbed for at least 20 minutes. Lie down or sit in a comfortable position.

- 1 Close your eyes and take a few deep breaths, allowing your body to relax.
- 2 Starting from the top of your head, slowly scan down through your body, paying attention to each area.
- 3 Notice any sensations, tensions, or feelings in each part of your body.
- 4 As you notice each sensation, simply observe it without judgment.
- 5 Continue this process all the way down to your toes.

EXERCISE 1: BODY SCAN MEDITATION

After completing the body scan, take a few moments to journal about your experience. Consider the following prompts:

What sensations did you notice in different parts of your body?

Were there any areas of tension or discomfort?

EXERCISE 1: BODY SCAN MEDITATION

Did you notice any emotional responses as you scanned your body?

Were there any parts of your body that were difficult to sense or connect with?



EXERCISE 2: EMOTION-BODY CONNECTION EXPLORATION

For this exercise, you'll explore how different emotions manifest in your body.

- 1 Make a list of 5-10 emotions you commonly experience (e.g., joy, anger, fear, excitement, sadness).
- 2 For each emotion, close your eyes and recall a time when you felt that emotion strongly.
- 3 As you remember the experience, pay attention to how your body feels.
- 4 In your journal, describe the physical sensations associated with each emotion.

Use the following prompts to guide your reflection:

Where in your body do you feel each emotion most strongly?

EXERCISE 2: EMOTION-BODY CONNECTION EXPLORATION

Are there any physical sensations that surprised you?

Do you notice any patterns in how emotions manifest in your body?



EXERCISE 3: MOVEMENT AND SENSATION

This exercise will help you explore how movement affects your body awareness.

- 1 Choose a simple movement or stretch (e.g., rolling your shoulders, gentle twists, or arm circles).
- 2 Perform the movement slowly and mindfully.
- 3 Pay attention to the sensations in your body as you move.
- 4 After the movement, stay still and notice any changes in your body.

Journal about your experience, considering these questions:

What sensations did you notice during the movement?

EXERCISE 3: MOVEMENT AND SENSATION

How did your body feel different after the movement?

Did you become aware of any areas of tension or release?



PART 2

Daily Somatic Journaling Routine

Daily Somatic Journaling Routine



Now that you've completed the initial exploration, you're ready to establish a daily somatic journaling practice. This routine will help you maintain and deepen your mind-body connection.

MORNING CHECK-IN (5-10 MINUTES)

Start your day with a brief body scan and journal entry:

- 1 Sit or lie comfortably and take a few deep breaths.
- 2 Scan your body from head to toe, noting any sensations or feelings.
- 3 In your journal, answer the following questions:

How does my body feel upon waking?

MORNING CHECK-IN (5-10 MINUTES)

Are there any areas of tension or discomfort?

What's my overall energy level?

Is there any emotion or thought that's particularly present?

EVENING REFLECTION (10-15 MINUTES)

End your day with a more in-depth somatic journaling session:

- 1 Find a quiet space where you can reflect on your day.
- 2 Take a few moments to breathe deeply and center yourself.
- 3 In your journal, explore the following:

What were the most significant physical sensations I experienced today?

How did my body respond to different situations or emotions throughout the day?

EVENING REFLECTION (10-15 MINUTES)

Were there any moments when I felt particularly connected to or disconnected from my body?

How do I feel in my body right now, at the end of the day?

Is there any tension or emotion that I'm holding in my body that I'd like to release?



WEEKLY REVIEW (20-30 MINUTES)

At the end of each week, take some time to review your daily entries and reflect on any patterns or insights:

1 Read through your entries from the past week.

2 In your journal, consider the following:

What patterns do I notice in my physical sensations or emotions?

Have there been any shifts in my body awareness over the week?

WEEKLY REVIEW (20-30 MINUTES)

What have I learned about my mind-body connection this week?

Are there any areas of my body or aspects of my physical experience that I'd like to explore further?



A minimalist interior scene with a round mirror, dried grasses, and an open book on a wooden table.

PART 3

Additional Prompts for Deeper Exploration

Additional Prompts for Deeper Exploration



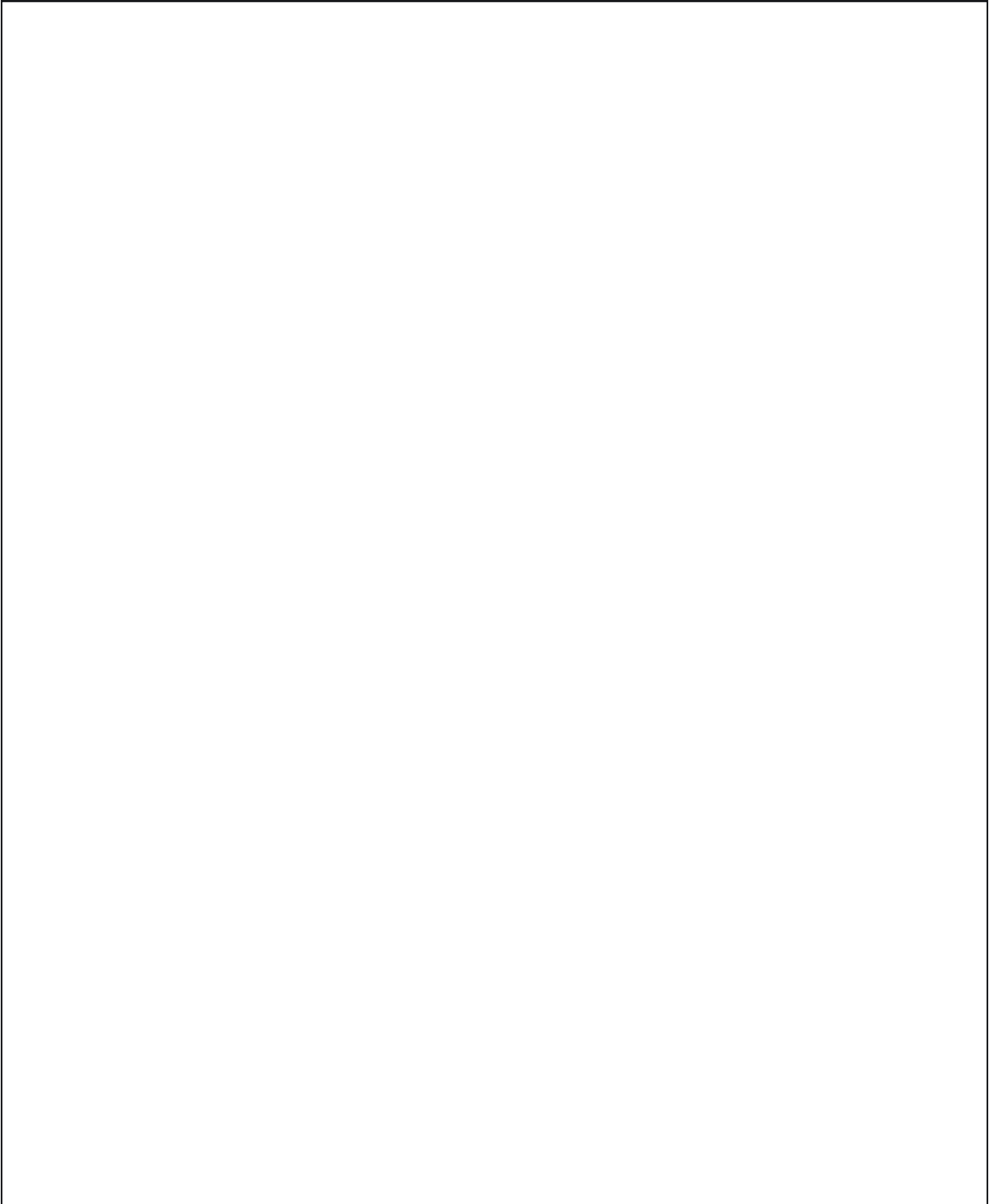
As you become more comfortable with your daily somatic journaling practice, you may want to delve deeper into specific aspects of your mind-body connection. Here are some additional prompts to support your ongoing exploration:

STRESS AND TENSION MAPPING

- 1 Draw an outline of a body (or use a printed template).
- 2 Close your eyes and tune into your body, noticing areas of tension or stress.
- 3 On your body outline, shade or color the areas where you feel tension, using different colors or intensities to represent the level of tension.
- 4 Journal about what you've discovered.

STRESS AND TENSION MAPPING

Draw an outline of a body (or use a printed template)





STRESS AND TENSION MAPPING

Where do you hold the most tension in your body?

Are there any patterns in how stress manifests physically for you?

What might these tension patterns be telling you about your emotional state or life circumstances?

SOMATIC METAPHOR EXPLORATION

- 1 Choose a current challenge or situation in your life.
- 2 Close your eyes and ask yourself, "If this situation had a physical sensation, what would it feel like in my body?"
- 3 Allow an image or metaphor to arise (e.g., "It feels like a heavy weight on my shoulders" or "It's like a knot in my stomach").
- 4 Explore this metaphor in your journal.

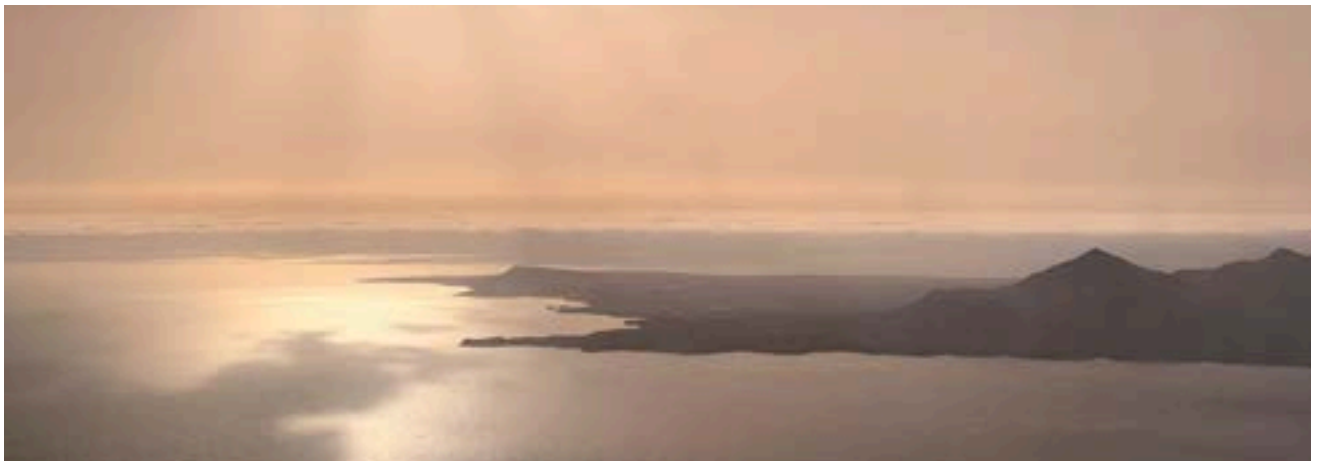
Describe the metaphor in detail. What does it look, feel, or sound like?

How does this metaphor relate to your actual physical sensations?

SOMATIC METAPHOR EXPLORATION

What insights does this metaphor offer about the situation?

If you could change this physical metaphor, what would you transform it into?





EMBODIED EMOTIONAL RELEASE

- 1 Identify an emotion that you've been holding onto or struggling with.
- 2 Find a safe, private space where you can move freely.
- 3 Close your eyes and imagine this emotion as energy in your body. Where do you feel it?
- 4 Allow your body to move in whatever way feels natural to express or release this emotion.
- 5 After the movement, journal about your experience:

How did it feel to express the emotion through movement?

EMBODIED EMOTIONAL RELEASE

Did you notice any shifts in your physical or emotional state?

What did you learn about how you hold or process this emotion in your body?

SOMATIC GRATITUDE PRACTICE

- 1 Sit comfortably and take a few deep breaths.
- 2 Scan your body slowly, from head to toe.
- 3 As you scan, notice parts of your body that you're grateful for.
- 4 In your journal, write a thank-you note to your body.

Acknowledge specific parts of your body and what they do for you.

Express gratitude for sensations or experiences your body allows you to have.

SOMATIC GRATITUDE PRACTICE



Somatic Exercises

Is Somatic Exercise the Same as Somatic Therapy?

According to [Verywellhealth.com](https://www.verywellhealth.com) somatic therapy practices focus on how the body expresses painful experiences, such as trauma or complicated grief, to aid in recovery. It is described using various terms, such as somatic movement, body psychotherapy, somatic psychotherapy, and somatics.

Somatic exercise may be part of somatic therapy. Somatic therapy provides you with the tools you need to relax, manage stress, or relieve trauma.

With all these somatic therapies, the goal is to bring awareness to the sensations that stress or trauma are producing, and ultimately, for the person to feel safer in their body and heal. Trauma, in particular, affects the somatic nervous system. Various types of somatic therapy can be helpful for healing trauma and its effects.



Potential Health Benefits

Scientific evidence to support specific somatic exercises is limited. This is mainly because this is a new concept in the Western world. Even so, the evidence that does exist is promising.

Benefits of somatic exercises include:

- **Improving balance and coordination:** Somatic practices like yoga, tai chi, and dance may improve balance and coordination and increase range of motion in adults.
- **Pain relief:** Somatic exercises may help you pay attention to pain and change your movement and posture to reduce pain. A 2017 study of 53 older people found evidence that the Feldenkrais approach, which helps people expand movement while increasing body awareness, was beneficial for managing back pain.
- **Reduced stress and anxiety:** Somatic exercises combine mindfulness with movement. Many focus on a mind-body connection that allows you to become more aware of thoughts, emotions, and physical sensations. Research on somatic yoga and somatic Pilates has shown that they reduce stress and anxiety.
- **Trauma healing:** Somatic therapies may be a helpful way to work through repressed or blocked emotions related to traumatic experiences. Research on somatic exercises shows they can be a therapeutic way to manage post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depressive symptoms associated with trauma.

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SOMATIC EXERCISES

- **Reducing unwanted emotions and increasing emotional awareness:**

Research on Laban movement, which focuses on posture and movements to reduce unwanted emotions and create a more positive emotional experience, shows that somatic exercise can be a helpful tool for fostering resiliency and providing resources to manage emotional challenges.

- **Weight loss:** While the research on weight loss and somatic exercise is limited, these exercises can support your weight loss goals by including physical exercises, such as dance, yoga, Pilates, mindful stretching, and walking meditation. Somatic exercises can also lower cortisol (a stress hormone) levels in the body to make it easier to lose weight.

Below are **7 Easy Somatic Exercises for a Healthier Mind and Body** based on the article from <https://www.verywellhealth.com/somatic-exercises-8749929>

Somatic exercises involve moving your body based on how you feel rather than reaching a specific goal. Somatic means related to the body, while soma means the body as you perceive it. According to the Somatic Movement Center, somatic movements are practiced consciously with intent and focus on the internal experience rather than the external appearance and end result.

Somatic exercises might help with healing when used with conventional medicine. Your somatic nervous system (SNS) is part of the peripheral nervous system. SNS disorders cause physical pain and feelings and behaviors (i.e., anxiety and anxious behaviors) related to physical symptoms.

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SOMATIC EXERCISES

Few studies have examined the effects of somatic movement. One study found that somatic exercise can help manage negative emotions, and other studies have found benefits of physical movement.

Somatic movement requires you to focus your attention on how your body feels as you move. Examples of somatic exercises include dance, yoga, and Pilates.

1. Dancing

Dance is a beneficial somatic exercise that promotes feel-good chemical messengers called endorphins (such as serotonin). It can relax you, lift your mood, and even lead to physical health benefits.

Somatic dance practices are specific dance moves where the primary focus is the dancer's experience and not that of the audience. Research shows that dancers who enjoy somatic dance practices can focus on their feelings and emotions, cognitive processes, and improved physical health.

2. Yoga

Somatic yoga uses traditional yoga poses, emphasizing internal awareness over external results.⁵ It encourages you to tune into what your body is feeling rather than aiming for a specific movement or pose. You explore movements slowly and pay attention to how those movements feel.

A 2014 study reported that research on somatic yoga shows beneficial effects on somatization, psychological symptoms, and stress-related biomarkers.

Somatization occurs when psychological symptoms become physical ones.

SOMATIC EXERCISES



SOMATIC EXERCISES

In the study, 24 healthy study participants had no experience with yoga. They were followed for 12 weeks of yoga training. After 12 weeks of yoga training, questionnaires from the participants showed decreases in tension anxiety, depression, anger-hostility, fatigue, confusion, and somatization. Researchers concluded that yoga was a helpful exercise for improving somatic and mental health symptoms.

3. Pilates

Traditional Pilates aims to increase strength and flexibility. Somatic Pilates emphasizes improving the connection between the mind and body.

Research on somatic Pilates shows it has significant health benefits, including:

- **Improved flexibility:** Pilates exercises are designed with flexibility in mind. Somatic Pilates can also alleviate body tension, especially related to past trauma.
- **Better posture and body alignment:** Somatic Pilates helps you recognize bad posture. The exercises strengthen the muscles of the back and spine, so you have better posture. Over time, postural improvements may also lead to better spine and hip alignment.
- **Stress management:** Combining various types of somatic exercises, including somatic Pilates, can help you feel relaxed. This allows you to effectively manage and prevent stress.
- **Improved chronic pain:** Chronic pain refers to intermittent or persistent pain that lasts three or more months. Somatic Pilates may help reduce the amount of pain you feel. Research shows that somatic movement can lead to significant pain reduction.

4. Aikido

Aikido is a self-defense martial art that originated in Japan. It incorporates meditation and breathing techniques from Zen Buddhism and requires mindful concentration and physical effort.

Research on aikido as a somatic exercise shows that it promotes improved coordination, focus, and concentration, increases joint muscle flexibility, and boosts mindfulness and self-awareness to manage mental well-being.¹² Aikido also teaches self-defense and safe techniques to manage falling and avoiding injuries.

5. Mindful Walking

When you walk mindfully, you walk at a pace that allows you to notice everything around you—the sights, sounds and smells. You might notice how your feet move through the grass or how the breeze gently shakes the tree branches above you. Mindful walking helps you feel grounded, relaxed, and even less anxious, sad, or stressed.

6. Tai Chi

Tai chi is a popular form of somatic exercise that originated in China as a martial art and has been around for centuries. It combines gentle movements with deep breathing and meditation to boost mental and physical well-being. Movements in tai chi are slow and deliberate to force your focus on each movement and breath to promote relaxation.

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SOMATIC EXERCISES



SOMATIC EXERCISES

The research on tai chi shows it can be used to manage various disease types, including involving:

- Musculoskeletal system or connective tissue diseases
- Circulatory system diseases
- Mental and behavioral disorders
- Nervous system diseases
- Respiratory system diseases
- Endocrine, nutritional, or metabolic diseases
- Genitourinary (genital and urinary) system diseases

When prescribed as an exercise treatment, it is considered a moderate-intensity exercise.

7. Other Mindfulness Techniques

Somatic exercises include various mindfulness practices. Mindfulness focuses on awareness and acceptance.

With awareness, you focus on the present moment, and with acceptance, you observe and accept. The goal of mindfulness is to be keenly aware of what you are thinking, sensing, and experiencing in the present moment without judgment, interruption, or attachment.

Mindfulness techniques have evidence to support the improvement of chronic pain and the management of emotional health and mood symptoms.

SOMATIC EXERCISES

Some mindfulness methods include:

- Meditation
- Breath work
- Mindful stretching
- Body scanning
- Grounding

Meditation

Mindful meditation is a mental training exercise that helps you to slow down racing thoughts, let go of negative feelings, and calm the mind and body.¹⁶ It combines mindfulness with meditation.

Techniques vary and can be done standing, sitting, walking, or moving. You don't need any special tools or props. All you need to do is find a comfortable place, a few minutes of free time, and a clear mindset.

Breath Work

Breath work is a breathing technique that intentionally channels and focuses on breathing. It includes diaphragmatic breathing, in which you lie on your back with one hand on the chest and the other on the stomach. You inhale slowly through the nose, keeping the chest as still as possible, and then exhale through pressed lips.

Mindful Stretching

Stretching is a safe and helpful activity for all healthy adults to improve muscle and joint health. It can also affect the mind and body, especially when done in a slow and focused manner.¹⁶

UPMC Health Beat. [A beginner's guide to mindfulness.](#)

Mindful stretching is an excellent way to relax and reduce stress.

Body Scanning

Body scanning is a type of meditation that involves paying attention to your body and bodily sensations in a sequence from the feet to the head.¹⁷ It can be a helpful way to deal with physical tension that you may not even be aware of.

Body scanning can help you become aware of how every part of your body is feeling, including aches, pains, and tension. The goal is not to relieve the pain but to learn from it so you are better equipped to manage it.¹⁷

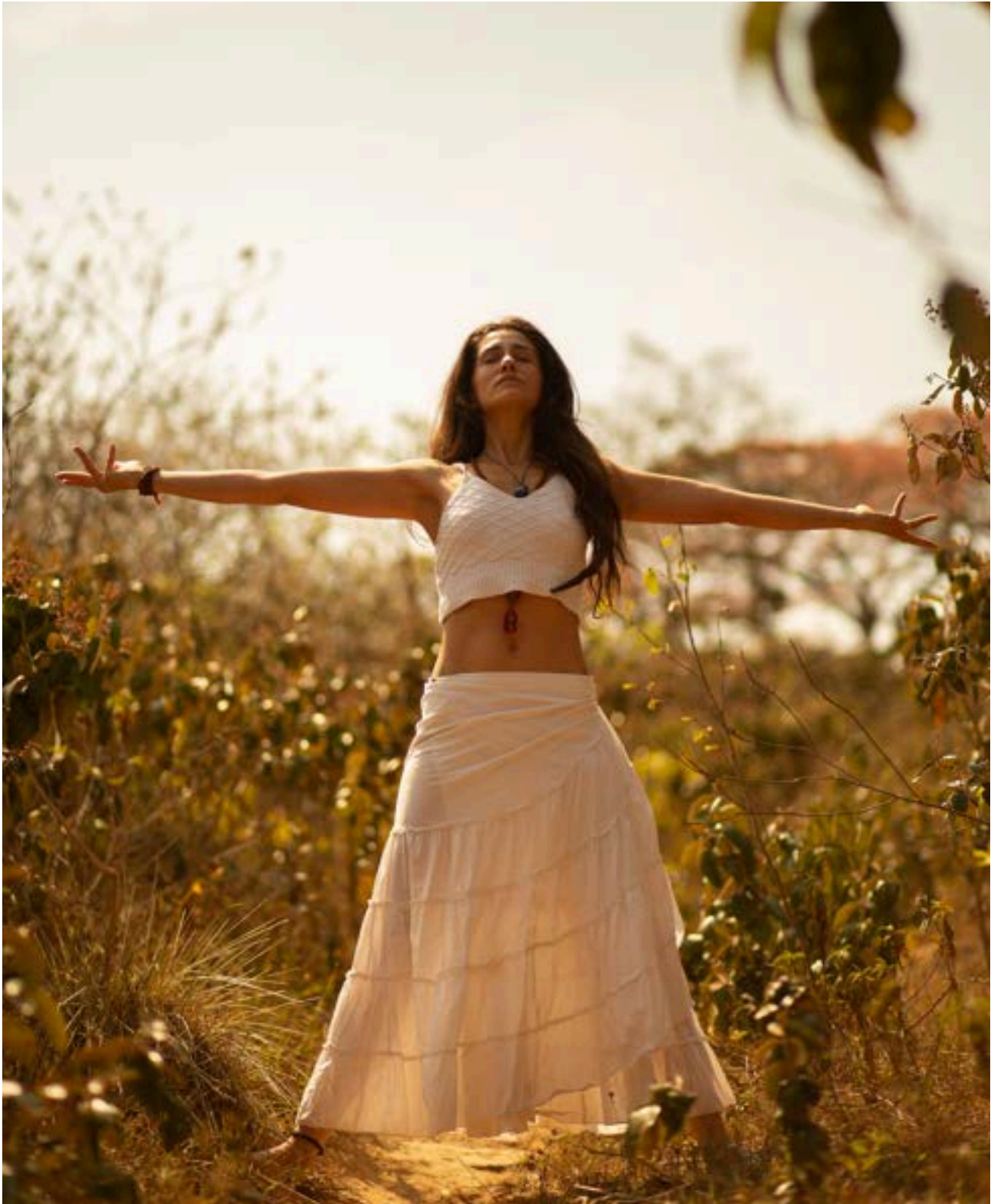
Grounding

This exercise involves [placing your bare feet](#) on the earth's surface or participating in other types of body awareness in which you sense your body parts and their movements and sensations.

Research on grounding shows that it can help reduce pain, boost healthy immune system responses, and reduce chemical factors related to inflammation and infection.

For more details visit: <https://www.verywellhealth.com/somatic-exercises-8749929>

SOMATIC EXERCISES



I hope you found this journal & recommended exercises helpful in your journey to mind-body awareness!

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