

CENTERING PRACTICE



Lengthening The Spine & Exhaling

- **Centering doesn't have to be done perfectly and it can't be done wrong.** There are five dimensions of a full Centering Practice: Length, Breath, Ground, Width, and Depth
- **Lengthening our spine** gives us connection to what we care about (aspiration – the horizon, the heavens) but also grounds us (earth, support, resting into where we are). And, computing hunched over machines capitulates us!
- Sometimes **sitting on the edge of your chair helps to elongate the spine**, have feet on the ground, your knees at a 90-degree angle, open back of the neck (tuck chin slightly), have open or closed eyes but with an outer or inner gaze looking down at a 45-degree angle. This keeps breath running more easily as tilting the chin up cuts off deep breathing.
- **Take a few deep exhales – you can think of this as “riding the elevator down” with each deep exhale helping you drop** (down from head and shoulders and into the belly center). The more we exhale, the more the breath comes in naturally, diaphragmatically (widening our rib cages), and feeling each breath come in like a spa breath!
- **As you exhale, you can guide people to participate with vocalizations** sighing or blowing air out loudly until all air eeks out (out out out). When leaders do this unselfconsciously, participants feel less self-conscious.

Opening the Heart & Shoulders

- **Squeeze shoulder blades together tightly, tightly** (opening heart center and the ability to face the world and the moment); hold your shoulder squeezes for many seconds
- **Do big exaggerated shoulder rolls.** Check in – you should feel more alive with increased blood flow and hydration from circulation. Remember: “Numb tissue is dumb tissue”.
- **Hike shoulders up to your ears** and then let them down and do some **head rolls gently** (chin down and forward then to one side, back and to the other side)
- **Leaders carry heavy burdens** and, thus, movement in the shoulder feels good because it restores circulation and energy.

Grounding & Releasing

- **Ground yourself by dropping 10-15% more into your hips** – feel your feet on the ground, allow everything in your body to drape over your skeleton and be supported by your bones versus muscles. Let the core of your body stack into the bowl of the belly & over your hips.
- **Feel the chair rise up to meet/hold you** – esp. head centers or when fear and anxiety are running. We don't have to be holding everything up, we can allow energy to come from the base and to feel supported.
- **Let gravity pull all the tension down and out** through the ground. Feel your weight in the chair and the heaviness in your feet.

Left Foot - Sensing & Grounding

- **Notice the energy in your left foot** and feel its contact with the floor, bring all of your awareness to your left foot - your shoe, feel your toes, feel in and around your ankle, notice any heat or cold or buzzing.
- **Using your imagination, send a big tap root through your left foot into the earth** through your left foot. Let any energy on the left side of your body melt down into the earth through your left foot and get heavy in your left foot.
- **Sense in to find your heartbeat in your left foot.** There's a whole world to discover in your feet!



Right Foot – Sensing & Grounding

- **Notice the energy in your right foot** and feel its contact with the floor, bring all of your awareness to your right foot - your shoe, feel your toes, feel in and around your ankle, notice any heat or cold or buzzing.
- **Using your imagination, send a big tap root through your right foot into the earth** through your right foot. Let any energy on the right side of your body melt down into the earth through your right foot and get heavy in your right foot.
- **Sense in to find your heartbeat in your right foot.** There's a whole world to discover in your feet!
- **Do a few more deep exhales**, notice slowing down as you exhale fully and breath in deeply.

Twisting Left & Right & Breathing Deeply

- **Now gently twist from right to left** - take your right palm to the right inside of your right knee and look over your left shoulder, take a deep breath and turn deeper into the twist as you exhale. Breathe into and exhale to widen your left rib cage two times.
- **Twist from the left to the right now** - take your left palm to the inside of your left knee and look over your right shoulder, taking a big breath and exhaling through your widening right rib cage two times, deepening your twist over your right shoulder the second breath.

Placing Palms Up in Posture of Receptivity

- **Come back to center with your palms facing up.** This is a posture of receptivity. Opening to the world. Being at rest and at ease, while breathing naturally.

Widening Attention to Be More Inclusive & Connected

- **Slowly bring your attention back into the room**, with soft eyes cast down at 45 degrees and gradually widening your gaze into the room, letting the world come to you slowly, with colors, textures, light, dark and shapes. No need to "go after" any image, just let the whole come to you across 170 degrees of soft gaze.
- **Bring your gaze up to horizontal and begin to come back into connection with each other** with soft eyes that see from a place of acceptance. If in a circle you can look around and quietly acknowledge each other's presence by just seeing each other in this more centered, relaxed state.
- **Finish by doing a Mood Check** together.