

# Mind Body Spirit - The Whole News

RNAO-CTNIG Newsletter

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Photo courtesy of Sandra Miller - Nature's Best Photography

*"Like the autumn leaves, I release what I no longer need and trust in my growth."*

## A Few Words from the President



**Jessica Burford**  
**CTNIG**  
**President**

Dear CTNIG Community,

I hope you have all enjoyed a restorative summer, filled with moments of ease and joy. As we now welcome autumn, that season of gathering and reconnection, it feels like the perfect time to reflect on the richness of our shared work and the opportunities ahead.

Over the summer, I had the privilege of presenting at the International Council of Nurses (ICN) Congress in Finland, where my fellow principal investigator, Dr. Sue Bookey-Bassett, Chair of the NLN.ON and I shared our research, *The Co-Discovery of Workforce Wellness Flourishing Through Aesthetic Engagement*. In this qualitative study, participants were invited to engage in an artistic endeavour of their choosing and to share a narrative description of what makes them feel well at work. Thematic analysis of the narratives revealed that workforce wellness in healthcare relies on supportive conditions, including psychological safety, empowerment, inclusion, work-life balance, flexibility, and growth opportunities. Understanding that wellness drives professional performance and is shaped by enabling environments, making wellness a shared responsibility creates an integrated system that promotes staff vitality and high-quality care. Wellness was not simply personal, but relational and organizational, creating ripple effects across teams and systems. A shift toward prioritizing worker well-being is key to sustainable healthcare.



I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to CTNIG for the generous financial support that enabled me to travel to attend the ICN Congress 2025 and share this work on the world stage. It was a true honour to represent our community, sharing unique research approaches that celebrate complementary therapies and highlight the importance of wellness in nursing leadership and practice. As the nursing world and beyond seek more ways to promote well-being, centring research is a proactive way to amplify the benefits of complementary therapies.

As we turn the page into autumn, our CTNIG focus this year will be on connecting with nature, recognizing its timeless role in restoring balance, sparking creativity, and supporting well-being. We are also delighted to welcome new members to our executive team and to extend a warm greeting to new members of our community. Together, we look forward to sharing offerings that draw inspiration from this theme, and to exploring how nature can nourish both our personal wellness and our professional practice.

Wishing you a joyful and abundant season ahead, and looking forward to the many ways we will connect as a community.

Best,

Jessica Burford CTNIG Chair

PhD(c) RN, R/TRO, BScHK(Hon), MN-LPNP, GNC(C), CCNE, CHE, CNLC(C)  
Canadian Nurses Foundation Scholar

# Physicians Can Now Prescribe Free Visits to Conservation Halton Parks in Ontario

*By Andrew Cruickshank Published: January 16, 2025*



Feeling depressed, stressed, anxious, or a long list of other maladies? Ontario's Halton region physicians can now prescribe time in nature as an antidote.

In early December 2024, Conservation Halton partnered with Pa/Rx, a nature prescription program launched by the B.C. Parks Foundation in November 2020. The partnership allows physicians to prescribe 10 free visits to any of Conservation Halton's eight parks, including Crawford Lake, Mount Nemo, Hilton Falls, Robert Edmundson, Mountsberg, Area 8, Kelso, and Rattlesnake Point.

"People can come hiking, mountain biking, rock climbing. You can do any of the free activities in our parks," says Craig Machan, Conservation Halton's director of parks and operations. "We've got 110 kilometres of trails that people can hike on and beautiful views of the escarpment."

The B.C. Parks Foundation launched the Pa/Rx program in response to the rising number of mental and physical challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. A growing amount of scientific research has shown that time spent in nature can improve health and an individual's well-being.

How to turn your cottage walk into a stress-reducing "forest bath"

According to the Pa/Rx program, time in nature can reduce your stress-hormone levels; reduce your risk of developing heart disease, high blood pressure, and diabetes; boost your memory; and increase your lifespan.

A 2019 study found that spending two hours per week in nature is enough to reap the benefits. That's why the Pa/Rx program recommends patients spend

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20 minutes a day in nature, whether that means going for a walk through a forested area on

your lunch break or even just sitting on a bench among the trees.

To prescribe a Conservation Halton pass, physicians must be registered with the Pa/Rx program. Halton Healthcare has partnered with Pa/Rx. It's the first hospital system to partner with the program, and it means any physician associated with Halton Healthcare can provide a nature prescription. However, physicians don't have to be based in the Halton Region to prescribe a Conservation Halton pass. They can be based anywhere in Canada, as long as they're registered with Pa/Rx.

In 2022, Pa/Rx said that more than 10,000 prescribers had registered within Canada. That's five per cent of all practising physicians in the country.

Here's how the prescription works: the patient has to fill out a [form](#) on Conservation Halton's website, which includes inputting a licence plate number. In return, the patient will receive a



code via email. This code can be used to book 10 free park passes. When the patient shows up at the park, the gate will automatically open thanks to the registered licence plate.

### **Why time in nature makes you happier and healthier**

A visit to one of Conservation Halton's parks will normally cost you \$10.50 if you book online, or \$12

if you pay at the gate. In the first month, 22 patients registered for the pass, says Machan.

The Pa/Rx program has also partnered with Parks Canada, allowing registered physicians to prescribe an annual Parks Canada discovery pass—this gives patients free access to national parks for a year—as well as with the Toronto Zoo, which offers 50 per cent off admission. And doctors can prescribe 20 per cent off a Toronto and Region Conservation Authority

Conservation Parks membership pass.

"You just feel better after spending a little bit of time in nature. It does a great job of improving the clarity inside your head," says Machan. "You can get your blood pumping and you really do feel better when you get back to your car."



*All photos courtesy of Conservation Halton*



"It's the first day of autumn! A time of hot chocolatey mornings, and toasty marshmallow evenings, and, best of all, leaping into leaves!"

Winnie the Pooh, *Pooh's Grand Adventure*

## Welcome Our New CTNIG Executive Board Members

### Education Officer

Leonor De Biasio RN, BScN MEd



Leonor De Biasio is a Registered Nurse, Reiki Master and teacher, career mentor, and completing her certification as a Holistic Nurse Coach and Consultant through The CIINDE. With over 27 years of nursing experience in perioperative care, transfusion medicine, and education. She has previously worked as an Advanced

Practice Clinical Educator in Perioperative Nursing, currently serves as a Program Advisor for the Operating Room Nursing Program at Humber College, and is a Learning and Development Operations Specialist at VHA Home Healthcare in Ontario. She also runs an independent practice, offering heart-centred Nurse Coaching and Reiki sessions to support healing, balance, and growth.

Her journey into holistic wellness began through the exploration of nutrition and the discovery of Reiki, where she experienced the power of energy alignment and the importance of caring for the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual aspect of ourselves. Leonor's mission is to support others on their path to restoring balance and growth—honouring the body, nurturing the mind, uplifting emotions, and strengthening the spirit. She brings this philosophy to her nursing, mentorship, independent practice, and her new role as the Education Executive Network Officer with CTNIG.

### Social Media Officer

Alicia Ramroop BScN, RN, MN, Holistic Nursing Advocate



Alicia Ramroop BScN, RN, MN, is an accomplished nurse leader with ten years of clinical experience and a passionate advocate for integrative care. Her professional journey began in the intense environment of the Emergency Room (ER), where she built a strong foundation in critical care and acute patient management.

Alicia's dedication to professional excellence led her to complete a Master of Nursing (MN) degree, solidifying her expertise in advanced nursing practice and leadership.

She felt a calling in her personal life to CTs with an emphasis the integration of these therapies with the mind, body and soul. She has cultivated a deep love for various treatment modalities, including (but not limited to): Aromatherapy, Art Therapy, Chakra Balancing, Herbalism, Meditation, Massage Therapy, Prayer, Healing Touch, Reiki, Visualization and Reflexology.

Alicia now skillfully integrates selected, evidence-informed modalities into her individual nursing practice in private clinics, focusing on a holistic approach that addresses patients' physical, emotional, and spiritual needs for comprehensive healing.

In her role as an Engagement Nurse Officer (ENO) for social media, Alicia leverages her clinical experience and leadership skills to inspire and mobilize the nursing community. Her core mission is to empower nurses to practice at their fullest professional scope, intentionally incorporating the mind, body, and soul in their care.

Alicia champions the belief that integrating complementary therapies alongside conventional care is essential for high-quality, holistic nursing practice. Join her as she leads the movement toward a more integrated and empowered future for nursing.

### Policy and Political Action Officer

Margarita Weaver (She/Her) RN BScN MPH CCHNC



Margarita Weaver is a certified Holistic Nurse & Coach, Reiki Master Teacher, Registered Nurse, and has her Master's in Public Health. Currently, she has her own independent practice, specializing in working with caregivers and residents in long term care, to

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help prevent dis-ease, improve their health, well-being, and outlook. Her complementary practice includes providing group or individual sessions for Health / Wellness / Life / Spiritual Coaching, Reiki, Tapping (EFT), Meditation, Mindfulness, Self-Care, Behavioural / Habit Change. She also teaches Reiki. She is excited to be part of the Complementary Therapy Nurses' Interest Group and hopes that nurses can include complementary therapies into their practice for both themselves and their clients.



## Inspiration Corner

**“If I cannot do great things, I can do SMALL things in a great way.”**

**MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.**

GH





## RNAO AGM 100th anniversary - CTNIG participation

I had a delightful and rewarding experience staffing the CTNIG poster board during the 100th RNAO AGM. I was able to connect with some very enthusiastic nurses and students who were interested in Complementary Therapies (CT), for both personal and professional purposes. After highlighting our group's vision, mission and work, a number were keen in learning more about our group and a couple indicated they were interested in executive positions. It was also wonderful seeing our past president Jacquie Dover (now a mindfulness teacher and expressive arts student) who is considering re-engagement in some capacity in the future.

Our president, Jessica Burford, created a beautiful professional poster presentation and we were able to provide some of our handout material on the board. Crystal Hepburn, our finance officer, made copies of the latest newsletter to hand out which made quite a positive impression. Elaine Pipher, our newsletter committee member, Crystal, and Jessica lent a hand answering the many inquiries from the attendees. All this created much excitement and interest about our group as we were able to show the vast resources and support we provide our members.

Jessica and Crystal did a splendid job speaking to the whole audience during Member's Voices mentioning various CTNIG activities.

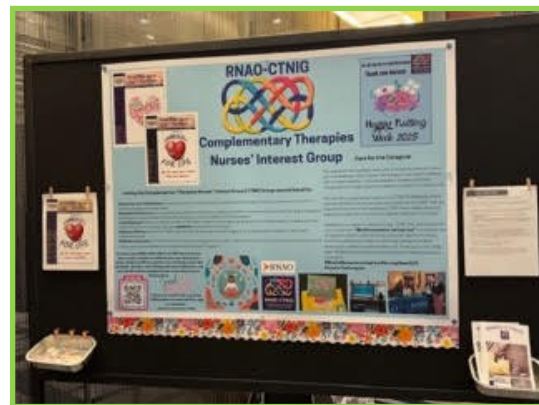
A nice perk at this year's AGM, as it was the 100th anniversary of the RNAO, were complimentary meals (breakfast and lunch) for everyone.

Much appreciated!!!

Even though we didn't have a booth this year, the poster served as a mechanism to initiate conversations about CT with the attendees. You can't beat an in person event for promoting CT and the CTNIG and engaging with nurses to hear personal stories of how they incorporate CT into their holistic healthcare practice.

I want to extend many thanks and gratitude to all the CTNIG members who helped out at this year's AGM and made our presence known and to all the RNAO members /students who stopped by our display.

*Submitted by Darka Neill*



## What's Happening

### Wellness Events ~ Submitted by Alicia Ramroop

1. I had the pleasure of discovering the newly opened Tranquility Trails Farm in Ashburn, Ontario, located on 70 acres. They specialize in yoga/pilates on the farm amongst the lavender, workshops (art, sound bathing etc) and lavender inspired treats/drinks and products.

I've found these integrated wellness events to be a profound synthesis of complementary therapies, moving far beyond simple relaxation. The core experience centers on mind-body grounding through



Yoga or Pilates on the farm, which immediately shifts me from a state of professional high-alert to focused presence. This is quickly followed by the intentional sensory exposure of the tranquility trails, serving as pure Forest Bathing (Shinrin-Yoku)—a practice scientifically proven to lower cortisol and increase immune-boosting cells. Or trail walking and taking in the serenity of nature. This layered approach is then enriched by aromatherapy from the lavender, a natural stress reliever, and insights into herbalism concerning immune properties like those of elderberries.

The true depth of the experience, however, lies in its capacity for soul-level reconnection and self-expression. Engaging in botanical casting or making essences provides a vital outlet for art therapy, allowing the creative part of the brain to flourish. Sessions of sound bathing, meditation, and visualization ensure deep internal grounding, leaving me feeling remarkably calm, deeply relaxed, and uplifted. Blending these multiple modalities, this made my summer trips to the farm a comprehensive, life-changing therapeutic experience that reinforces my conviction that holistic, full-scope nursing must begin with this kind of integrated self-care.

<https://www.tranquilitytrails.ca/>

2. Taking time for myself this summer at Souls Path Retreat & Wellness Spa was a powerful demonstration of integrated complementary therapies in action—essential self-care for any nurse battling burnout. Located on 58 acres of land in Blackstock, Ontario. This retreat wasn't merely a break; it was a necessary system reset. My

experience was centered on deep healing and grounding, utilizing modalities like therapeutic aromatherapy massages and Indian head massage for physical restoration, complemented by energy work such as Reiki and chakra balancing for mental and spiritual realignment. Fueling my body with wholesome foods, engaging in Thai yoga, and hiking the surrounding trails, I found a profoundly uplifting space away from the clinical world.

The true magic was in the holistic synergy of the experience. The combination of targeted bodywork and energy healing, balanced by the grounding presence of nature—simply hiking the trails and connecting with the sweet, gentle resident donkey Jenny—provided a deep and immediate sense of tranquility. Leaving Souls Path, I felt completely renewed, proving that embracing these diverse complementary therapies in a restorative natural setting is key to sustaining the mind, body, and soul required of a compassionate nurse.

<https://www.soulspath.ca/>





# Reclaim Your Calm:

## Forest Bathing as a Prescription for Nurse Burnout and Holistic Well-being

In the demanding world of nursing, where fatigue and burnout are constant threats, finding effective strategies for self-care is not a luxury—it's a professional imperative. As nurses, we are tasked with caring for and essentially healing others, yet frequently neglect our own well-being. But what if the most powerful antidote to the relentless pace of healthcare lies just beyond the hospital walls, in the quiet embrace of nature?

I advocate for nurses to practice at their fullest scope, incorporating mind, body, and soul. With one of our theme for this year being nature based wellness, I would like to introduce you to Forest Bathing, or Shinrin-Yoku, a nature-based practice that offers profound benefits for both our personal well-being and our professional practice.

### What is Forest Bathing (Shinrin-Yoku)?

Originating in Japan, Shinrin-Yoku literally translates to "taking in the forest atmosphere." It is not about hiking or intense exercise. Instead, it's a mindful, sensory immersion in a natural environment. It's about slowing down, opening your senses, and connecting with the forest (or any natural setting) in a deliberate way through being in nature via grounding our physical bodies and being open to meditative and visualization.

### Why Is It So Important for Nurses? The Science Behind the Calm

The benefits of Forest Bathing are far from anecdotal; they are backed by a growing body of scientific evidence. For nurses grappling with burnout, the impact is particularly profound:

- ✓ **Combating Burnout & Stress Reduction:** Studies show that spending time in nature can significantly reduce stress hormones like cortisol, lower blood pressure, and decrease feelings of anxiety and depression. A randomized, controlled trial on healthcare professionals, highlighted in the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health (Mdpi.com/1660-4601/19/21/14505), demonstrated the efficacy of Shinrin-Yoku interventions in reducing burnout markers. Imagine the impact this could have on your week!
- ✓ **Boosting Immunity:** Research indicates that exposure to phytoncides—airborne chemicals emitted by trees—can boost our immune system by increasing the activity of Natural Killer (NK) cells, a type of white blood cell that fights off infections and even cancer. A stronger immune system means fewer sick days and greater resilience.
- ✓ **Enhancing Mind, Body, and Soul Connection:**
  - ⇒ **Mind:** Improves mood, focus, and cognitive function. The gentle sounds and sights of nature offer a restorative break from overstimulation in our daily lives.
  - ⇒ **Body:** Lowers heart rate, promotes relaxation, and can aid in pain management. This can also allow us to tap into our parasympathetic nervous system.



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- ⇒ Soul: Fosters a sense of awe, connectedness, and grounding, helping to restore spiritual equilibrium often depleted by the demands of caregiving. This also allows us to step into reaching our higher selves through meditation and visualization. This deep connection helps us remember our intrinsic value beyond our professional roles.

As a recent article on the Sigma Repository ([Sigmarepository.org/gen\\_sub\\_csm/33/](http://Sigmarepository.org/gen_sub_csm/33/)) emphasizes, Forest Bathing serves as a powerful self-care modality for nurses, reinforcing how integral these practices are to maintaining our professional health and effectiveness.

### **How to Practice Forest Bathing: Your Prescription for Wellness**

No special equipment is needed, just an open mind and comfortable clothing.

- ✓ Find Your Spot: Seek out a local park, nature trail, or even a quiet wooded area in your own backyard.
- ✓ Turn Off & Tune In: Put away your phone and leave behind distractions.
- ✓ Wander Aimlessly: There's no destination. Let your body and spirit intuitively guide you. Walk slowly, pause often.
- ✓ Engage Your Senses:
  - ⇒ Sight: Notice the intricate patterns of leaves, the way sunlight filters through the canopy, the colors of wildflowers.
  - ⇒ Sound: Listen to the rustling leaves, the chirping birds, the gentle breeze.
  - ⇒ Smell: Inhale the scent of pine needles, damp earth, or blooming flowers. These are those beneficial phytoncides!
  - ⇒ Touch: Feel the bark of a tree, the texture of moss, the cool air on your skin.
  - ⇒ Taste: (Optional and with caution!) Sip on a cup of water, some tea or mindfully observe a safe wild berry.



- ✓ Be Present: Allow yourself to simply be in nature, without judgment or agenda. If your mind wanders, gently bring it back to your senses.
- ✓ Duration: Even 20-30 minutes can be beneficial, but aim for an hour or two if possible.

### **Your Call to Action: Advocate for Wellness, Practice at Full Scope**

As nurses, our role extends beyond medication and tasks and procedures. It encompasses advocating for our patients' holistic health and, critically, for our own. Integrating complementary therapies like Forest Bathing into our lives and recommending them to patients exemplifies practice at our fullest professional scope.

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### **I challenge you this fall especially to:**

Prioritize a Forest Bathing session this week. Experience the calming power of nature firsthand.

Share your experience with our group on social media, using the hashtag #NurseForestBathing and tagging our group. @rnaoctnig on IG

Advocate for natural healing spaces in your workplaces, from green spaces to indoor plant arrangements, to roof top gardens.

Educate your patients on the benefits of nature exposure as a simple, powerful tool for stress reduction and well-being.

Let's empower ourselves and each other to step away from the relentless demands of healthcare and our daily lives, breathe deeply, and reconnect with the profound, inherent healing power that surrounds us. Our well-being, and the well-being of those we care for, depends on it.

Here is the link to a good article highlighting forest bathing with practical tips for nurses

[https://www.sigmarepository.org/gen\\_sub\\_csm/33/](https://www.sigmarepository.org/gen_sub_csm/33/)

*By Alicia Ramroop, BScN, RN, MN*

### **References:**

Kavanaugh, J., Hardison, M. E., Rogers, H. H., White, C., & Gross, J. (2022). Assessing the Impact of a Shinrin-Yoku (Forest Bathing) Intervention on Physician/Healthcare Professional Burnout: A Randomized, Controlled Trial. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19(21), 14505. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph192114505>

Leibold, Nancyruth, "Forest bathing as a self-care modality for nurses" (2021). General Submissions: Clinical Settings Materials. 33.

<https://www.sigmarepository.org/>

## **Website**

### **Healing in the Forest: a guide to forest bathing**

A national health programme for forest bathing was started by the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries in 1982. This was based on an intuitive idea that people could be healed by nature and was influenced the teachings from the Shinto and Buddhist religions. Two thirds of Japan is forest, but the overpopulated urban life in Japanese cities is stressful; characterised by technoculture, and a phenomenon called karoshi meaning 'death from overwork'. Today, there are over 60 official Shinrin-yoku trails in national forests and it is 'prescribed' by the Japanese health service.

Dr Qing Li and his team at Nippon Medical School in Tokyo are credited with the earliest research into the benefits of forest bathing, which started in 2004 and is summarised in his book *Forest Medicine*.

For more information check out the following websites:

<https://www.practicenursing.com/content/clinical/an-introduction-to-forest-bathing-for-practice-nurses/>

<https://blog.ontarioparks.ca/guide-forest-bathing/>

<https://natureforesttherapycanada.org>





## Self-Care Tips

### Every step counts, but do you really need 10,000

Medscape. July 28, 2025

Good news for the sole: Contrary to popular wisdom, people can get the same health benefits from walking 7000 steps a day as they do from walking 10,000 paces, according to a comprehensive review and meta-analysis published in The Lancet Public Health.

“For all outcomes, health benefits continued to accrue until around 7000 steps,” said Katherine Owen, PhD, biostatistician at the University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia, who led the review. “After 7000 steps, benefits either plateaued or there were very small additional benefits.”

Owen and her colleagues reviewed 57 studies and conducted a meta-analysis on 31 of them, examining the relationship between health and physical activity based on daily steps.

The researchers looked at nine different health outcomes: all-cause mortality, the incidence of and deaths from cardiovascular disease, dementia, cancer incidence and mortality, the incidence of type 2 diabetes, depressive symptoms, and falls. Every outcome showed improvement as the amount of daily activity increases, but for most people the benefits tapered off at around 5000-7000 steps per day.

To view full article go to:

[https://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/every-step-counts-do-you-really-need-10-000-2025a1000jsw?ecd=mkm\\_ret\\_250817\\_mscpmrk-OUS\\_InFocus\\_etid7641618&uac=454438PT&implD=7641618](https://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/every-step-counts-do-you-really-need-10-000-2025a1000jsw?ecd=mkm_ret_250817_mscpmrk-OUS_InFocus_etid7641618&uac=454438PT&implD=7641618)



### How to mentally reset after a tough shift?

Medscape - June 11, 2025.

Start by taking a few moments to debrief. Reflect on what went well, what challenged you, and what you can improve. Writing down your thoughts or discussing the shift with a trusted colleague can provide valuable perspective.

Next, try to engage in grounding exercises such as deep breathing, relaxation, mindfulness, or meditation to calm down your nervous system. Physical movement like stretching, yoga, or a short walk can also help release built-up tension.

Last, disconnect from work. Engage in activities that bring you comfort, whether that's listening to music, spending time with a loved one, or enjoying a hobby.

By intentionally processing your experiences and then giving yourself space to rest, you'll help build resilience and be better prepared for your next shift.

To view full article go to:

[https://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/how-mentally-reset-after-tough-shift-2025a1000fgl?ecd=mkm\\_ret\\_250621\\_mscpmrk-OUS\\_ExcNews\\_etid7510218&uac=454438PT&implD=7510218](https://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/how-mentally-reset-after-tough-shift-2025a1000fgl?ecd=mkm_ret_250621_mscpmrk-OUS_ExcNews_etid7510218&uac=454438PT&implD=7510218)



# Meditation

## A Meditation to Be At Peace With How Things Are by Mark Bertin

Read and practice the guided meditation script below, pausing after each paragraph Or To listen to the audio practice go to [mindful.org](http://mindful.org)

1. Start with finding a comfortable posture that you'll be able to sustain for these few minutes of practice. Bring a sense of kind and patient awareness to our body first. Notice how you're sitting. Make adjustments so that you feel awake and alert. Notice areas of tension, and see if you're able to release them a little bit, gathering your awareness and bringing it to the sensation of breathing.
2. Let go of any need to do anything or make anything happen right now. You can reframe moments where you become distracted from the breath as a success. The mind always stays busy. Things happen that draw our attention and awareness away throughout the day, and each moment you come to the breath is a moment of awareness, a moment of intention. When you get distracted, just remember this sense of intention with clarity. You can say to yourself, Oh, my mind is busy —and then let go and simply come back to the next breath.
3. Next, expand your awareness to the entirety of your body. Most of us live with experiences of pleasure, and also moments of discomfort or pain at times. And if something definitively needs adjustment to relieve you of some physical pain right now, that's always okay. But for anything else that's either comfortable for you to work with or unchangeable in this moment, see if you can simply notice it, and then come back to the breath.
4. Now, continue to use your breath lightly as an anchor, shifting your awareness to notice your emotional state. Emotions are part of our experience. They're there whether we acknowledge them or not. They tend to influence how we think and how we interact with the world, so it's empowering to cultivate a sense of open and caring awareness. Living peacefully with our emotions as they arise and pass is core to living at peace in the world. It's also core to staying in touch with our best intentions, as emotions tend to drive the bus if we're not paying attention to them.
5. See if you can give yourself permission for these next few minutes to stay aware of your emotions. Offer care if they're difficult. Offer compassion and give yourself permission to experience them at all. Let go of any need to fix or change them. Right now I'm experiencing happiness, or Right now I am experiencing sadness, or whatever emotions come to mind. Can you bring to this part of the practice a sense of compassion, too? Lean toward the intention to treat yourself as you would a young child or a close friend.
6. Remember, if your mind gets distracted, there's always the option of coming back to following the breath again.
7. Now, let's shift our awareness to thoughts. Thoughts can feel so all-consuming, and even through meditation, we can't make them stop. That's never the point. Rather, we're asking if we can live more at peace with this part of our experience, recognizing we each have our own habits. We each make up stories, stories that try to make sense of our past or that project into the future. Problems can feel sticky and all-consuming and ruminative.



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So for these few minutes of practice, can we note thoughts simply as thoughts? Fears simply as fears. Fantasies simply as fantasies. Observe them like clouds passing in the sky, and also with a sense of peace and care. My mind is in an agitated state right now. This is really exhausting. Or at a different time maybe we experience a quieter mind, a simpler mind, noticing the thoughts as they arrive with more ease. But through the practice, simply noticing and naming: Oh, there is that thought, and then coming back to the breath again.

8. The intention and perspective we bring to the practice is fundamental to the practice itself. Through the practice, we can aim to live life—even during exceedingly difficult times—with more awareness and compassion and self-care. This leads to a better ability to stay in touch with our own best intentions when we need to act precisely or communicate well. So when we practice, whatever happens will happen. But can we do our best to stay aware, to stay clear of thought, and to stay kind.
9. As we bring our practice to a close, settle back into the breath for a moment. Then, perhaps set the intention to continue this sense of compassionate and kind awareness as you move on into the rest of your day.

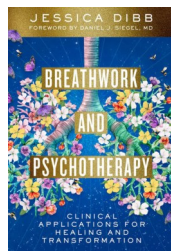


Mark Bertin, MD., is a pediatrician, author, professor, and mindfulness teacher specializing in neurodevelopmental behavioral pediatrics. He's a regular contributor to Mindful.org and

Psychology Today. He is the author of *How Children Thrive: The Practical Science of Raising Independent, Resilient, and Happy Kids* (Sounds True, 2018). Dr. Bertin resides in Pleasantville, New York. For more, visit [developmentaldoctor.com](http://developmentaldoctor.com).

## Breathwork and Psychotherapy

Clinical Applications for Healing and Transformation- Jessica Dobb



**A journey into the power of conscious breathing for therapy and everyday life.**

Breathing is at the center of our lives, yet we are only beginning to tap into its full potential as a tool for healing.

Conscious breathing is a powerful mechanism for transforming our physiological, emotional, and brain states, and is the fastest way to cultivate integrated presence. However, its full capacity for facilitating healing, personal development, stronger relationships, self-actualization, and personal and collective love is vastly unrecognized and underutilized.

In this book, breathwork expert Jessica Dobb offers compelling reasons to integrate the power of breathwork with psychotherapy and other healing and wellness practices. Here readers will find inspiration for daily breathwork practice as well as the methods, case examples, and actionable advice needed to incorporate breathwork into therapeutic sessions. Seamlessly marrying ancient wisdom with contemporary science, this insightful guide is for clinicians, breathwork practitioners, and anyone interested in exploring the transformative power of breath.

### Why This Book Matters

Breathing is at the center of our lives, yet its full potential for healing remains underexplored. In her book, Jessica offers a compelling integration of breathwork with clinical practice to:

- Transform physiological, emotional, and brain states—especially in therapeutic contexts
- Support psychotherapy, personal development, and everyday well-being
- Deepen presence, enhance relationships, and nurture self-actualization
- Seamlessly fuse ancient wisdom with contemporary neuroscience and clinical applications



# Relaxation Strategies for Children and Teens

from Valley Children's Healthcare

**Children can benefit from doing relaxation and mindful practices to deal with stress and improve well-being. Here are some strategies you can incorporate with paediatric patients as well as your own children.**

Relaxation strategies can help ease your child's stress and can teach your child to relax when feeling tense or upset.

Many of these strategies can be done at any place and any time. Your child will get the benefits of reduced stress from these strategies, as well as develop self-soothing and emotional regulation skills with regular practice.

Prompt your child to practice a relaxation strategy each day in a quiet, comfortable place. At first, you will need to be there to teach your child these strategies. Depending on your child's age and level of responsibility, you may be able to slowly give them more independence with these exercises. Some children may only need simple, daily reminders to practice these strategies once they have practiced them with you. Other children will need you to be with them to help them practice each day.

## Notice five things:

Taking a few moments to notice the world around you can help bring you back to the present.

- Sit down with your child wherever you are.
- Together, take a few deep breaths, then slowly look around and notice five things around you.
- Take turns sharing what you saw.

You can also practice noticing five things you hear or feel.

## Take 10 breaths:

In this exercise, you will practice mindful breathing with your child by taking 10 slow, deep breaths together.

- Sit or lie down on a comfortable surface next to your child.
- Close your eyes and put your hands on your bellies. Ask your child to take 10 deep breaths along with you. You will both breathe in so deeply that your bellies fill up with air.
- If 10 breaths are too many to start, try with just a few and work your way up together.



## Draw your emotions:

This is a good activity for younger children who often find it difficult to name their feelings. Try this activity with your child at different times, not just when they are sad or upset.

- Sit down together, close your eyes for a few moments and think about how you are feeling.

Draw your feelings and share your drawings with one another.

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### One bite:

One bite is a child-sized version of mindful eating. This form of meditation helps children pay attention to their experiences, emotions and physical sensations.

- Choose one small piece of food and explore how it looks, smells and feels in your hands.
- Take one small bite and hold the food in your mouths a few moments before chewing. Then notice how the food feels and tastes.



### Silence:

Silence is great to use when children are already calm and quiet. This will help them feel even more peaceful.

- Sit or lie in a comfortable place, trying to be as still and quiet as possible. One minute is a good place to start.
- When the time ends, share in soft voices what you heard or saw.

Transition to the next activity quietly and peacefully.

### Body scan:

Body scanning can help children get in touch with how their bodies are feeling, and help them recognize when their bodies are tense and relaxed.

- Lie down on your backs on a comfortable surface and close your eyes.
- Next, squeeze every muscle in your bodies as tight as you can. Squeeze hands into fists, curl toes, squish feet, make your arms and legs as stiff as possible and your tummies as hard as rocks.
- After a few seconds, release all of your muscles and relax for a few minutes.
- Talk about how your bodies were feeling throughout the exercise.

Another alternative is to call out and tighten each body part one at a time.

### Buddy breathing:

Buddy breathing helps children calm down, focus, relax and pay attention to their bodies.

- Grab your favorite stuffed animal or another small object
- Lie down on the floor and place the stuffed animal on your bellies.
- Breathe together in silence for one minute and notice how your Breathing Buddy moves up and down.

Ask your child to imagine their thoughts turning into bubbles and floating away.



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### Mindful walk:

Mindful walks help children connect with the world around them and ground them in a sense of rhythm and time.

- Take a few deep breaths before you begin your walk.
- Start walking slowly, paying attention to the different movements that go into each step: toes, heels, feet, legs, hands, arms.

Every so often, stop and notice one item or sound. Spend a few moments thinking about what you just saw or heard, then continue on your walk, focusing again on each of the movements that go into each step.

### Blow bubbles:

Help children send their worries and fears away by blowing bubbles.

- Once you have found a bubble-friendly place to set up, dip the bubble wand into the bubble solution.
- Take a slow, deep breath in.

Now slowly, steadily breathe out, blowing a bubble. As you breathe out, imagine you are also blowing out your worries and fears.



### Heartbeat exercise:

The heartbeat exercise can help children recognize when they feel anxious.

- Stand up next to your child.
- Jump up and down, run in circles, do jumping jacks or a silly dance for one minute.

At the end of that minute, sit or lie down, put your hands over your hearts, close your eyes and pay attention to your heartbeat, breathing and anything else you notice about how your body feel.

### Some relaxation and self-soothing resources for kids on YouTube

- Sesame Street: Calmful Breathing Exercises: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MHFG8JR\\_uel](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MHFG8JR_uel)
- Candle and Flower Breathing – Relaxing Mindfulness & Deep Breathing Exercise for Calm & Focus [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qTN\\_MtV5TFw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qTN_MtV5TFw)
- Butterfly Hug! 6-Minute Self-Soothing Meditation For Children Using The Butterfly Hug



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## Research

### I. Prevalence of Complementary Medicine Use in Children and Adolescents: A Systematic Review

Journal of Pediatric Health Care Volume 38, Issue 4, July–August 2024, Pages 505-519

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<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pedhc.2023.12.010>

#### Highlights

- The prevalence of [complementary medicine](#) (CM) use in children/adolescents is high
- Evidence suggests CM use in children/adolescents may be increasing.
- CM product, technique, and service use were notably different across countries.

#### Introduction

The first two decades of life profoundly impact the life course ([Boyce & Hertzman, 2018](#); [Wood et al., 2018](#)).

This trajectory is recognized by the World Health Organization ([WHO, 2023a](#)) and the United Nations ([United Nations Children's Fund, 2016](#); [United Nations Development Programme, 2023](#)), each of whom has called for greater investment in child and adolescent health and well-being. In particular, these agencies advocate that all children and adolescents should have timely access to appropriate, safe, effective, and quality health care.

Childhood and adolescence are periods of considerable growth, which includes significant cognitive, psychological, and physical development. These physiological and psychosocial changes, along with changes to the diet, lifestyle, and environment, can predispose children and adolescents to myriad health conditions, including colic, upper respiratory tract infections, pain syndromes, sleeping difficulties, diarrhea, [acne](#), stress, and anxiety ([Bodnar et al., 2016](#); [Corell et al., 2022](#); [Marques et al., 2019](#); [Viner et al., 2017](#)). In most cases, these conditions are mild

and/or self-limiting ([Blair et al., 2018](#); [Printz et al., 2016](#)). Accordingly, many parents may choose to manage these health conditions using over-the-counter medicines and/or complementary medicines (CM; [Karatas et al., 2023](#); [Lucas et al., 2019](#); [Lucas et al., 2020](#); [Solangi et al., 2016](#); [Wang et al., 2018](#)).

CMs are a “broad set of health care practices that... are not fully integrated into the dominant health-care system” of a country ([WHO, 2019](#)). These practices and/or interventions may include (but are not necessarily limited to) herbal medicine, nutritional

medicine, naturopathic medicine, osteopathy, chiropractic, yoga, homeopathy, massage therapy, mind-body medicine, and traditional Chinese medicine. Eighty-eight percent of WHO member states acknowledge the use of CM and have formally developed policies, laws, regulations, programs, and offices for CM to govern these practices. According to WHO, CM plays an important role in supporting the population's health needs and addressing many of the unique health challenges of the 21st century

([WHO, 2019](#)).

CM use in the general child and adolescent population is variable, with earlier reviews reporting lifetime prevalence rates between 9.0% and 87.6% ([Ernst, 1999](#); [Italia et al., 2014](#); [Posadzki et al., 2013](#); [Snyder & Brown, 2012](#)). However, these data are now more than a decade old and thus are unlikely to reflect the state-of-the-art. Consequently, data from these earlier reviews may no longer be apt in informing contemporary clinical practice, public policy, and clinical education regarding CM use in children and adolescents. The systematic review reported herein aims to address this knowledge gap by providing an up-to-date synthesis of the literature on the prevalence of CM use in children and adolescents across the globe.



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## Abstract

### Introduction

The objective of this systematic review was to determine the global prevalence of complementary medicine (CM) use among children and adolescents.

### Method

Seven databases and the reference lists of included studies were searched for pertinent observational studies. Studies were limited to those published in English from July 1, 2013. Included studies were appraised using the JBI checklist for prevalence studies.

### Results

Twenty studies were eligible for inclusion (385,527 participants). Most studies were assessed as having low risk of bias. Meta-analyses revealed a 23.0% (95% confidence interval, 0.226–0.234; 17 studies) short-term ( $\leq 12$  month) prevalence and a 77.7% (95% confidence interval, 0.760–0.794; six studies) lifetime prevalence of CM use in children and adolescents. Differences in CM use were evident across countries and regions.

### Discussion

The findings of this review indicate that the use of CM in children and adolescents is high and widespread and may be increasing.

To view full article go to: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0891524523003723>

## 2. Can Mind-Body Therapies Improve GI Outcomes?

Medscape. May 30, 2025

Batya Swift Yasgur, MA, LSW

A growing body of research shows that complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) can help treat certain gastrointestinal disorders. With up to 44% of people with diagnosed gastrointestinal (GI) disorders using CAM, chances are most gastroenterologists — whether they know it or not — are seeing patients who take products

or engage in practices that fall under its umbrella.

Many gastroenterologists are unfamiliar with CAM because it isn't widely taught in medical school. "Some doctors even discourage the use of CAM because they've never heard of a given intervention," said Gerard Mullin, MD, associate professor of medicine and director of the Johns Hopkins GI Clinical Laboratory, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, Baltimore, Maryland.

Unfortunately, many patients aren't telling their doctors about their CAM use because they're afraid of being judged, Mullin said. Patients also may not disclose their CAM use because they don't realize it's important to share with their physician or their doctor simply hasn't asked them about it.

But CAM's popularity makes it important for gastroenterologists to be educated about what their patients may be using, the risks and benefits of various CAM products and practices, and the evidence base that might or might not support their use.

To view full article go to:

[https://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/can-mind-body-therapies-improve-gi-outcomes-2025a1000ep6?ecd=mkm\\_ret\\_250901\\_mscpmrk-OUS\\_InFocus\\_etid7668547&uac=454438PT&implD=7668547](https://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/can-mind-body-therapies-improve-gi-outcomes-2025a1000ep6?ecd=mkm_ret_250901_mscpmrk-OUS_InFocus_etid7668547&uac=454438PT&implD=7668547)



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### 3. Patients With GI Issues? Natural Remedies May Give Relief

Medscape - August 11, 2025

Kathleen Doheny

Almost two thirds of Americans are burdened by gastrointestinal (GI) symptoms like heartburn, abdominal pain, bloating, diarrhea, and constipation. And for almost 40% of Americans, uncomfortable bowel symptoms are bad enough that they forgo routine activities such as exercising or spending time with their families.

Medications, both over the counter and prescription, targeting GI conditions are plentiful. Yet more and more patients are requesting natural routes to relief, doctors told *Medscape Medical News*, and it's likely your patients are, too.

Here are some examples from doctors on how they've integrated natural remedies into their practice for specific common complaints (eg. GERD, IBS, constipation, nausea and vomiting). Some remedies have published research to back them up, while others are anecdotal, but backed by patients and doctors reporting that they do work.

To view full article go to:

[https://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/patients-gi-issues-natural-remedies-may-give-relief-2025a100018iecd=wnl\\_tp10\\_daily\\_250812\\_MSCPEDI\\_T\\_etid7635831&uac=454438PT&implID=7635831](https://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/patients-gi-issues-natural-remedies-may-give-relief-2025a100018iecd=wnl_tp10_daily_250812_MSCPEDI_T_etid7635831&uac=454438PT&implID=7635831)



### 4. Reiki, Nursing, and Health Care

Lipinski, K; Van De Velde, J. *Nursing Clinics of North America*. 2020 Dec;55(4) 505-519.

### Abstract

Health care organizations are responding to consumer demand by offering more complementary and integrative health services in inpatient, outpatient, and clinic settings. Nursing has long embraced energy-based modalities such as Reiki and has been at the forefront of introducing body, mind, and spirit healing practices into health care settings. This article describes how nurses can integrate Reiki into both their personal lives for self-care as well as their professional patient care practices. An overview of Reiki's integration into hospital systems is presented as well as Reiki's use with various patient populations. The status of Reiki research is discussed.

### KEY POINTS

- Consumer demand is driving the integration of complementary and integrative health services such as Reiki into health care environments.
- Nurses can take leadership roles within their administrative and clinical settings to introduce complementary modalities such as Reiki to colleagues, patients, and families.
- Nurses can use Reiki for a self-care practice to manage the pressures faced in their day-to-day work environments and to prevent burnout and unhealthy coping.
- Reiki is safe, gentle, and easy to use, making it clinically appropriate for many types of patient care situations.

Systematic reviews of current research report that Reiki shows promise in helping to increase relaxation; reduce pain, anxiety, and depression; and improve general well-being.

To view full article go to: [www.kathielipinski.com > wp-content > uploads](http://www.kathielipinski.com/wp-content/uploads)

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[https://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/every-step-counts-do-you-really-need-10-000-2025a1000jsw?ecd=mkm\\_ret\\_250817\\_mscpmrk-OUS\\_InFocus\\_etid7641618&uac=454438PT&implID=7641618](https://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/every-step-counts-do-you-really-need-10-000-2025a1000jsw?ecd=mkm_ret_250817_mscpmrk-OUS_InFocus_etid7641618&uac=454438PT&implID=7641618)



# Recipe

## Kabobless Chicken and Vegetables

From Taste of Home

Total Time: Prep: 10 Min. + Marinating Bake: 45 Min.

Yield: 6 Servings

### Ingredients

- \* 1/2 Cup Olive Oil
- \* 1/2 cup balsamic vinegar
- \* 2 teaspoons lemon-pepper seasoning
- \* 2 teaspoons Italian seasoning
- \* 2 pounds boneless skinless chicken breasts, cut into 1-inch pieces
- \* 2 medium yellow summer squash, sliced
- \* 2 medium zucchini, sliced
- \* 1 medium carrot, sliced
- \* 1 cup grape tomatoes



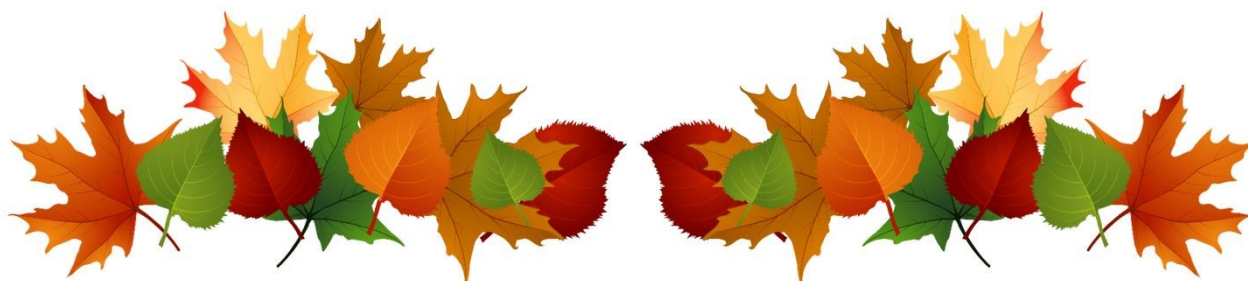
### Directions

In a large bowl, combine oil, vinegar, lemon pepper and Italian seasoning. Pour half the marinade into a separate bowl or shallow dish. Add chicken; turn to coat. Cover and refrigerate overnight. Cover and refrigerate remaining marinade.

Preheat oven to 350°. Line a 15x10x1-in. baking pan with foil. Drain chicken, discarding that marinade. Place squash, zucchini, carrot and tomatoes in pan in a single layer. Place chicken on top of the vegetables; pour reserved marinade over top. Cook until chicken is no longer pink and vegetables are tender, 45 to 60 minutes. Let stand 5 minutes before serving.

### Nutrition Facts

1 serving: 305 calories, 15g fat (3g saturated fat), 84mg cholesterol, 158mg sodium, 9g carbohydrate (7g sugars, 2g fiber), 32g protein. Diabetic Exchanges: 4 lean meat,



## Student Corner

### Finding Calm in the Chaos: Nurturing Your Whole Self as a Student Nurse

By: *Leonor De Biasio RN BScN MEd CPN (c)*  
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School is now in full swing and for many student nurses, clinical placements may already be underway. Student life right now can feel overwhelming; balancing lectures, assignments, and hands-on patient care, all while navigating new environments and expectations. It is natural to feel pressured or drained at times, but even in the busiest seasons, there is an opportunity to cultivate calmness, peace, and resilience within yourself.

As fall begins and the leaves turn brilliant shades of red, orange, and gold, nature reminds us that change is both natural and beautiful. The transformation of the season mirrors the journey of a student nurse—shifting, growing, and letting go of what no longer serves in order to make space for new learning and strength. Just as trees release their leaves gracefully, you too can approach challenges with trust that each stage is part of your unfolding growth.

We witness how nature captures this beautifully. A tree sways with the wind, yet its roots hold firm in the soil. A river flows steadily, even when it meets rocks along its path. Just as the natural world adapts and endures, you too can find balance amidst the demands of study, clinical practice, and personal life.

Caring for yourself as a student nurse means tending to your mind, body, emotions, and spirit—just as we nurture the whole person in holistic care. This doesn't always require hours of free time. Even in the busiest days, you can choose small moments of stillness that nourish your well-being:

**Mind:** Take 3 slow breaths before entering a patient's room or beginning an exam letting each exhale release tension.

**Body:** Stretch your shoulders or roll your ankles between classes allowing your body to reset.

**Emotions:** carry a small notebook or use your phone to jot down one thing you are grateful for during the day.

**Spirit:** If you cannot step outside, simply look out a window and notice the sky, a tree or ray of sunlight - reminders that nature's calm is always near.

Even these simple, one-minute practices can shift your energy and keep you connected to peace in the midst of challenge.

In the morning, try setting an intention such as "I choose to carry calmness and compassion into my work today." In the evening, reflect on three moments that lifted your spirit, no matter how small—a smile, a kind gesture, or even a quiet

**Tip:** Even 60 seconds counts. Small pauses keep your mind, body, emotions, and spirit nourished

pause. Gratitude transforms even difficult days into stepping stones for growth.

Remember, your journey is not about perfection but about presence. Each challenge you face builds resilience, each patient encounter deepens compassion, and each step you take brings you closer to becoming the nurse you aspire to be. Trust your path, tend to your roots, and allow yourself to bloom in your own time.

You are more than capable. You are growing, evolving, and carrying forward the light that nursing so beautifully requires.

#### Student Self-Care in a Minute (Tiny practices for busy days)

**3 Deep Breaths:** Pause anywhere—before a patient encounter, class, or exam. Inhale calm, exhale tension.

**Mini Stretch:** Roll your shoulders, stretch your neck or wiggle your toes between tasks.

**Gratitude note:** Jot 1 thing you are grateful for in a notebook or phone.

**Nature pause:** Bring the outdoors in. Look out a window and notice the sunlight, leaves or sky.

**Grounding visualization:** Imagine roots growing from your feet into the earth for 30 seconds.

**Positive intention:** Start your day with a simple thought- "I carry calm and compassion today."

**Evening reflection:** Recall 3 small wins or joys from your day, however tiny.

## On the Lighter Side



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