

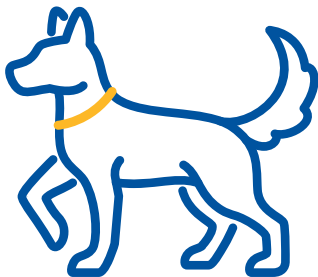
playful regulation ideas



DR. STRETCH: Stretch your body (even your face!) every direction to shoot the stress out of you. Stretch high, low, to the side, forward and backward. *When stress sneaks up on us, it can make our bodies wild. Stretching helps fight that feeling and reset to calm.*



HOT AIR BALLOON BREATHING: Breathe in as you raise your arms wide like a big balloon. Let your hands meet at the sky, then POP the balloon as you breathe out. Let your arms deflate like a popped balloon. Do this 5 times. *Breathing helps lower the amount of stress chemicals in our brain. Oxygen is stress' enemy!*



IMAGINARY PET: Close your eyes, think of your (or any cute) pet, and picture all the details about it – how cute the markings are around the eyes, its little pink tongue, the ears, its wet nose, how soft the fur is under your calm hand. Let your brain float around the image of the pet for 1 minute. *Replacing your thoughts with a happy or calm image is like telling stress to take a hike! It's your brain, and you choose what gets to go in it.*

DETECTIVE MODE: You've been in a fire drill before and know how to stop, drop and roll. In Detective Mode, we STOP, PAUSE, ASK. Stop to freeze your feeling from growing. Pause to see where the emotion is growing in your body (heart, tummy, brain, hands). Ask, "What's in my control here? What do I need? What are my choices?" *Use this when you feel like your anger might burst right off the charts. Going into Detective Mode helps us understand our feelings, needs, and what we can do to feel better.*

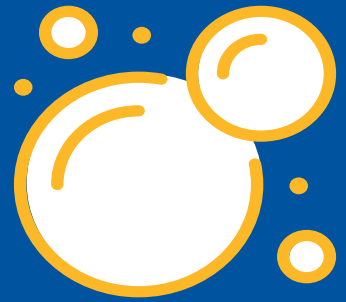


iSPY: Zone your brain in on 5 things (big or small) you can see around you. If you can find 5 superfast, challenge yourself to find 10. *When we are sad, mad, lonely or anxious, our emotions can feel like they are driving our brain. By being mindful through iSpy, we can ground ourselves back into the now.*

OIL THE TINMAN: Have you seen "The Wizard of Oz"? The Tinman needs oiling to help him keep going with his friends. The oil for humans is food, water, and rest. *Next time a feeling starts sneaking up on you, try to think of the areas of your body that might need "oiling." Then take a 5-minute rest, have a snack, or slug back some water.*



BUBBLE MASTER: Grab some bubbles, or the nearest invisible bubble wand, and practice blowing (real or fake) bubbles. The slower and the bigger the bubbles the more points! Blow bubbles for at least 1 minute, making sure you are breathing in ALLLL the air and blowing it out gently until your lungs are empty. *Sometimes when we are upset or stressed, the thing we may need the most is O2. Oxygen helps our body get back to baseline. Best part of this? No tools are needed if we have our imaginations with us.*



KNOW YOUR ANTHEM: Music is coined as being one of the best therapies out there. Know your jam that has that “pick me up” beat and let yourself feel the tune. *Music can set a new tone to our day. By strategically picking a song that is calm or happy, we can use that song to ward off sad or stressful feelings that may be lurking.*

SQUEEZE YA LATER: Have you ever been so mad you think you might explode? Did you know you can squeeze it away? Whether you use a stress ball or not, try squeezing your fist, crinkling your toes, squishing your face, clenching your tummy, or flexing your shoulders. Hold for 10 seconds. Repeat this until you feel your body fully relax after the flex. After you are done, tell stress what it needs to hear: “Squeeze ya later!” *This can be very effective when we are mad. Anger is largely a body-based feeling, so by tensing and squeezing our muscles, we can make it dissolve away. You are the boss, kid. Tell stress to take a hike!*



WRITING WIZARD: Grab your favorite writing utensil and a piece of paper and start writing whatever you want. Write aimlessly for 3-5 minutes or more if you need. It doesn’t matter if you write in a language that only you understand. After all, it’s just for you. *Writing can be like washing our hands for our brains. It “cleanses” away the stuff we don’t want around. After you’ve written, ask yourself what you want to do with the paper. Store it and add to it later? Keep it under your pillow? Shred it into 100 pieces and throw it out? Your call, Writing Wizard.*

CHANGE THE CHANNEL: Sometimes being able to push a button to think of something new can really help us change where our brain is at. Watching a mindfulness video, kittens frolicking, or a visual of a lava lamp on YouTube can help us calm down. Just make sure you pick something that soothes your body to calm after a trying feeling. *This is a great option when you are allowed to use your device. Make sure you pick a “channel” that will bring laughs, smiles, or calmness so that you can feel refreshed after the technique.*



DANCING QUEEN/KING: Did you know that feelings’ worst enemy is movement? Dancing is a way we can move our entire bodies as fast or slow as we need to feel human again. Whether you have music or not, give it a whirl, shake, shimmy, or spin to jazz that stress away. *This is a portable regulation tool that works for a variety of feelings – anxiety, sadness, anger. There is a dance for any of them. Let your body take the lead.*