Soothing rhythm breathing

A slower, deeper breathing rhythm that settles the body.

This is the foundation for the other compassion practices. The aim is to slow down enough for your body to feel steadier and safer. You do not need to relax completely.

1. Sit upright and comfortable, feet on the floor, shoulders back and down. Chest open.
2. Let your face soften. Try a slight, friendly half-smile.
3. Breathe a little more slowly and deeply than usual. Find a rhythm that feels soothing to you: perhaps in for 4 or 5, out for 4 or 5.
4. Let the breath be smooth and even. Feel it move down into your belly.
5. Notice your body slowing down. Feel the weight of your body held by the chair.
6. When your mind wanders, which it will, gently bring it back. No telling off.
7. If you like, on each out-breath say to yourself, in a warm inner voice, "slowing down" or "mind slowing, body slowing".
8. Carry on for two to five minutes.

Tips

- Short and often works best. Try a minute, several times a day.
- Practise when things are fine, so it is there when they are not.
- If focusing on the breath makes you anxious, focus on your feet on the floor or an object in your hand instead.

Day	When I practised	What I noticed
Mon		
Tue		
Wed		
Thu		
Fri		
Sat		
Sun		

From Compassion Focused Therapy, developed by Paul Gilbert.

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