

MODULE 4 ACTIVITY

Soles of the Feet

This practice helps teach adults how to reorient their attention from something negative or triggering in their immediate environment to a focal point that is largely neutral—the soles of the feet. Because the attention is now directed from a distressing environmental trigger (remember, your mind is part of the environment, so this means even negative thoughts and memories!) to a neutral point, the brain can quickly shift out of a stress response to a neutral, calm response. This meditative practice was originally developed for children with autism who have difficulty with changes in their environment and routines (e.g., transitioning from one activity to another), and has since been replicated effectively with children and adults with different needs, backgrounds, and experiences.

To complete this activity, either follow along with the transcript included on the next page or click on the audio file below. This recording was produced by Aria Fiat, PhD, and put to the test by hundreds of participants at a convention. The data from that study indicated that participants experienced an immediate and noticeable drop in stress reactivity in the body, measured by electrodermal activity, leading to reduced stress levels for several minutes after completing the activity.

Note: Click on the icon if you are on a computer and listen to the brief recording.



Soles of the Feet Transcript

SPEAKER (DR. ARIA FIAT)

Sit comfortably with the soles of your feet flat on the floor

Take several deep breaths. In 123
(each breath ~3 seconds)

Out 1 2 3 (each exhale ~3 seconds)

If you want you can close your eyes relax
(Pause ~5 seconds)

Breathe in through your nose and out through your nose. In 123 (each breath ~3 seconds)

Out 1 2 3 (each exhale ~3 seconds)

When you breathe in bring all the air all the way down into your belly. In 123 (each breath ~3 seconds)

Out 1 2 3 (each breath ~3 seconds)

Notice your breathing
(Pause ~5 seconds)

Keep breathing in slowly and breathing out slowly
(Pause ~5 seconds)

Think about your feet and toes, push your feet softly against the ground
(Pause ~1 second)

Pay attention to how the ground feels under your feet
(Pause ~1 second)

Slowly move your toes. Feel your shoes covering your feet. Notice how your socks or your shoes feel on your feet? Feel the heels of your feet against the back of your shoes.

Does it feel soft? Are your feet aching or do they feel comfortable?

(Pause ~10 seconds)

Keep breathing naturally and focus on the soles of your feet until you start to feel calm
(Pause ~5 seconds)

Let all your thoughts drift away. Let yourself feel calm and relaxed. Slowly breathe in the fresh air and breathe out all of your worries or frustration

(Pause ~10 seconds)

Take a few more deep breaths
(Pause ~12 seconds)

Feel any leftover tension leaving your body, Feel your body relax. Feel the calmness take over your body
(Pause ~5 seconds)

When you are ready, gently open your eyes
(Pause ~10–15 seconds)

Remember that you can use this exercise any time you want to feel more calm or have a clear head.

