

# **The Stress-Free Life: *Acupressure, EFT, and Mindfulness Techniques***

by Dr. Tom Ingegno, DACM, LAc



# Introduction

In today's fast-paced world, stress has become an all-too-familiar part of life. Chronic stress can seriously affect our physical and mental well-being, Whether due to work pressures, relationship challenges, or simply the daily grind.

When we're stressed, our bodies enter a "fight or flight" response, releasing cortisol and other stress hormones that can lead to symptoms like tension headaches, digestive issues, insomnia, and mood swings.[1] Over time, this constant state of stress can contribute to more severe health problems, from anxiety and depression to heart disease and autoimmune disorders.

The good news is that we have the power to manage stress naturally by tapping into our body's healing mechanisms. This is where mind-body practices come in—techniques that bridge the gap between our physical symptoms and our mental and emotional states.

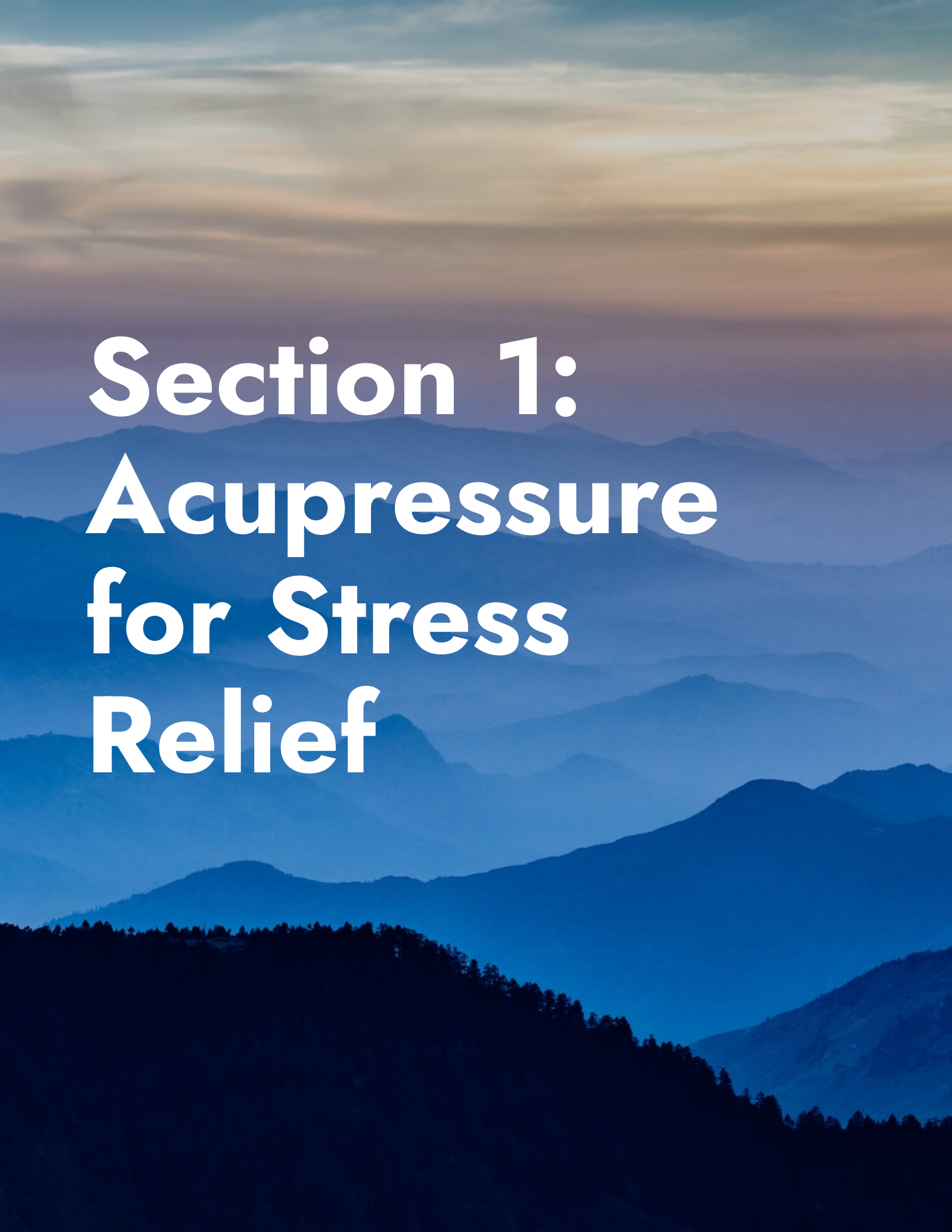
This guide will explore three powerful mind-body practices for reducing stress and promoting relaxation: acupressure, Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT), and mindfulness meditation. These techniques are rooted in ancient healing traditions yet backed by modern scientific research showing their effectiveness for stress relief.

You'll learn how to use acupressure to release tension and balance energy flow in the body. You'll discover how EFT can help alleviate stress and emotional blockages through gentle tapping. And you'll find out how mindfulness meditation can calm a racing mind and cultivate inner peace.

Best of all, these tools are available anytime, anywhere—no special equipment or prior experience is required. Regular practice builds resilience to stress and develops a greater sense of control over your physical and emotional well-being.

So, if you're ready to break free from the cycle of stress and embrace a calmer, more balanced way of life, read on to learn how acupressure, EFT, and mindfulness can help you achieve just that.





# **Section 1: Acupressure for Stress Relief**

# What Is Acupressure and How Can It Help With Stress?

Acupressure is a simple yet powerful natural therapy rooted in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). It works by applying gentle pressure to specific points on the body, called acupoints, which are believed to be connected to energy pathways known as meridians. These meridians help regulate the flow of energy, or *qi* (pronounced "chee"), throughout the body. When this energy flow is blocked or unbalanced, it can lead to physical or emotional discomfort, including stress.

## Why Try Acupressure for Stress?

**It's Easy and Accessible:** You don't need special tools or training to get started.

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**It's Safe and Natural:** Acupressure doesn't rely on medications or have side effects, making it a safe option for most people.

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**It Puts You in Control:** Acupressure empowers you to manage your stress anytime, anywhere.

By making acupressure part of your routine, you can create a simple, effective practice to combat stress and enhance your overall well-being. It's a gentle reminder that healing often starts with the power of your own hands.



# How Does Acupressure Help With Stress?

Stress can disrupt the body's natural balance, leading to tension, fatigue, headaches, and even digestive issues. Acupressure works by:

1. **Promoting Relaxation:** Pressing specific points on the body signals the nervous system to shift from “fight or flight” mode to a more relaxed state. This helps reduce the physical and mental effects of stress.
2. **Releasing Endorphins:** Stimulating acupoints encourages the release of endorphins, your body's natural feel-good chemicals. This can improve mood and ease feelings of anxiety.
3. **Improving Energy Flow:** By restoring the smooth flow of energy, acupressure can help you feel more balanced, focused, and grounded.
4. **Easing Tension:** Many stress-related symptoms, like neck and shoulder stiffness, can be relieved by targeting related acupoints. This helps relax tight muscles and improve circulation.

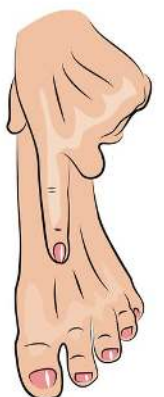
Acupressure is like acupuncture, but instead of using needles, it uses the touch of fingers, thumbs, or a small tool to activate these acupoints. It's non-invasive, easy to learn, and can be done anywhere—even at your desk or on a break.

# How to Perform Acupressure

Use your fingertips, knuckles, or a massage tool to apply firm, steady pressure to each point for 2-3 minutes to practice acupressure. You can gently massage the point in a circular motion or hold sustained pressure. Take slow, deep breaths as you work on each point, visualizing the stress and tension melting away.



## ACUPRESSURE



# Key Acupressure Points for Stress Relief

## Yin Tang (Hall of Impression)

Located between the eyebrows, this point is renowned for its calming effects on the mind and body. It's especially helpful for relieving stress-related headaches, insomnia, and anxiety.



The Yin Tang point is located between the eyebrows and is known for its calming effects on the mind and body. (Image source: Custom illustration) Shen Men (Spirit Gate): Found on the outer ear, this point is a gateway to the spirit. Stimulating Shen Men can help quiet the mind, reduce stress and irritability, and promote inner peace

# Shen Men Point

Found on the outer ear, this point is a gateway to the spirit. Stimulating Shen Men can help quiet the mind, reduce stress and irritability, and promote inner peace.



The Shen Men point is located on the outer ear and is believed to be a gateway to the spirit, helping to promote relaxation and inner peace.

# Large Intestine 4 - He Gu

He Gu (Union Valley): Situated in the web between the thumb and index finger, He Gu is a powerful point for relieving stress, headaches, and neck tension. Massaging this point can also help boost the immune system and alleviate allergies.



The He Gu point is found in the web between the thumb and index finger, effectively relieving stress, headaches, and neck tension.

# Liver 3 - Tai Chong

Caption: (Image source: Custom illustration)

Tai Chong (Great Surge): This point, located on the top of the foot, is known for its grounding and calming effects. Pressing on Tai Chong can help ease stress and anxiety and relieve tension in the neck and shoulders.



The Tai Chong point, located on the top of the foot, has grounding and calming effects, helping to relieve stress and anxiety.

# Pericardium 6 - Nei Guan

Found on the inner wrist, Nei Guan is often used for motion sickness, but it's also a potent point for reducing stress and promoting relaxation. It can help alleviate insomnia, palpitations, and other stress-related symptoms.



The Nei Guan point, located on the inner wrist, is effective for reducing stress, promoting relaxation, and alleviating stress-related symptoms like insomnia and palpitations.

A close-up, profile view of a woman with blonde hair, her eyes closed, and her hand tapping her cheek. The background is blurred, showing another person in a similar pose. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

## **Section 2: Tapping Away Stress with Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT)**



# What is EFT or Tapping?

Emotional Freedom Technique, or EFT, is a simple yet powerful self-help method that involves tapping specific acupuncture points while focusing on a stressful situation or negative emotion. Developed by Gary Craig in the 1990s, EFT is based on acupuncture and energy psychology principles, helping to clear emotional blockages and restore balance to the body's energy system.

EFT is effective for reducing stress, anxiety, and a variety of other psychological and physical issues. By combining gentle tapping with mindful attention to your thoughts and feelings, EFT can help you release the grip of stress and cultivate a greater sense of calm and emotional well-being.



# The Basic EFT Tapping Sequence

Here's a step-by-step guide to the basic EFT tapping sequence:

1. Identify the issue: Consider the stressful situation or negative emotion you want to address. Rate its intensity on a scale of 0 to 10
2. Craft your setup statement: Create a phrase that acknowledges the issue and affirms self-acceptance, such as: Even though I have this stress about [issue], I deeply and completely accept myself.

**Step 1: To perform the setup, Tap on the Karate Chop point (side of the hand) while repeating your setup statement three times.**

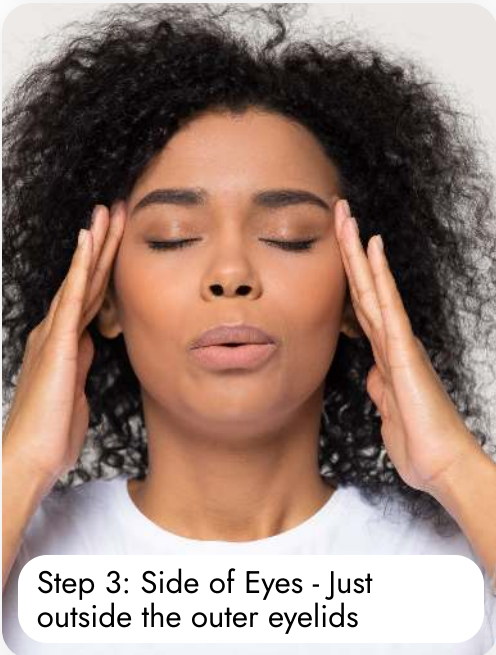


Tap here with your fingers, switch sides and repeat when done.

**Tap through the sequence: Tap 5-7 times on each of the following points while repeating a reminder phrase (e.g., "this stress")**



Step 2: Tap the eyebrows at the ends by the nose



Step 3: Side of Eyes - Just outside the outer eyelids



Step 4: Under the Eyes- Tap lightly below the center of the eye on the bone



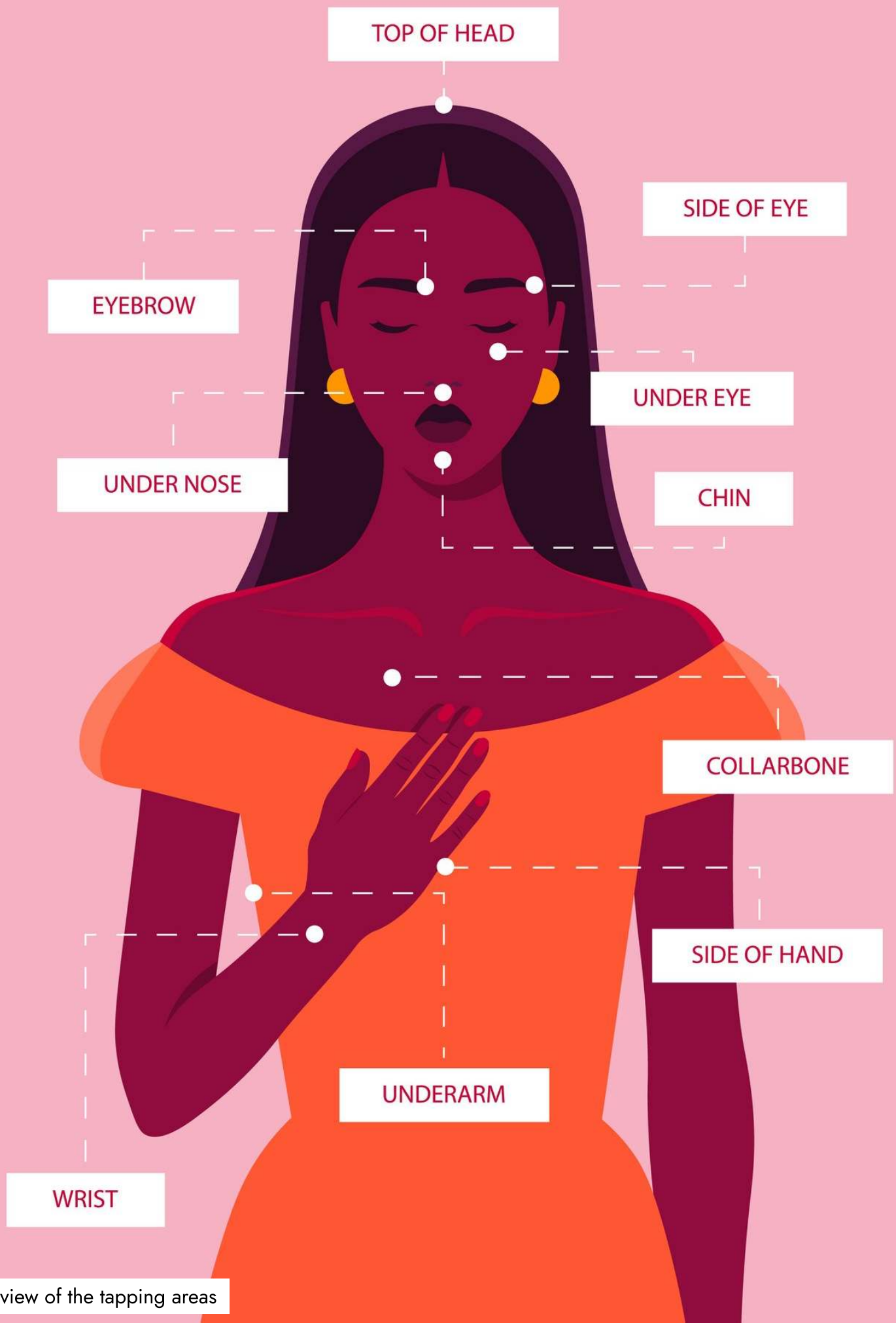
Step 5: Tap directly under the nose



Step 6: Tap the middle of the chin



Step 7: Tap each collar bone



An overview of the tapping areas

# EFT for Stress Relief: Sample Scripts



Here are a few sample EFT scripts for common stress-related issues. Follow the tapping format by stating the setup statement three times while tapping the karate chop points. Then, tap the areas in order while thinking of the reminder phrase.

## **Overwhelm:**

Setup: "Even though I feel overwhelmed by everything I have to do, I choose to accept myself and my feelings."

Reminder Phrase: "Feeling overwhelmed"

## **Tension Headache:**

Setup: "Even though I have this tension headache from all the stress, I deeply and completely accept myself."

Reminder Phrase: "This tension headache"

## **Anxiety:**

Setup: "Even though I'm feeling so anxious about [situation], I honor my feelings and choose to relax."

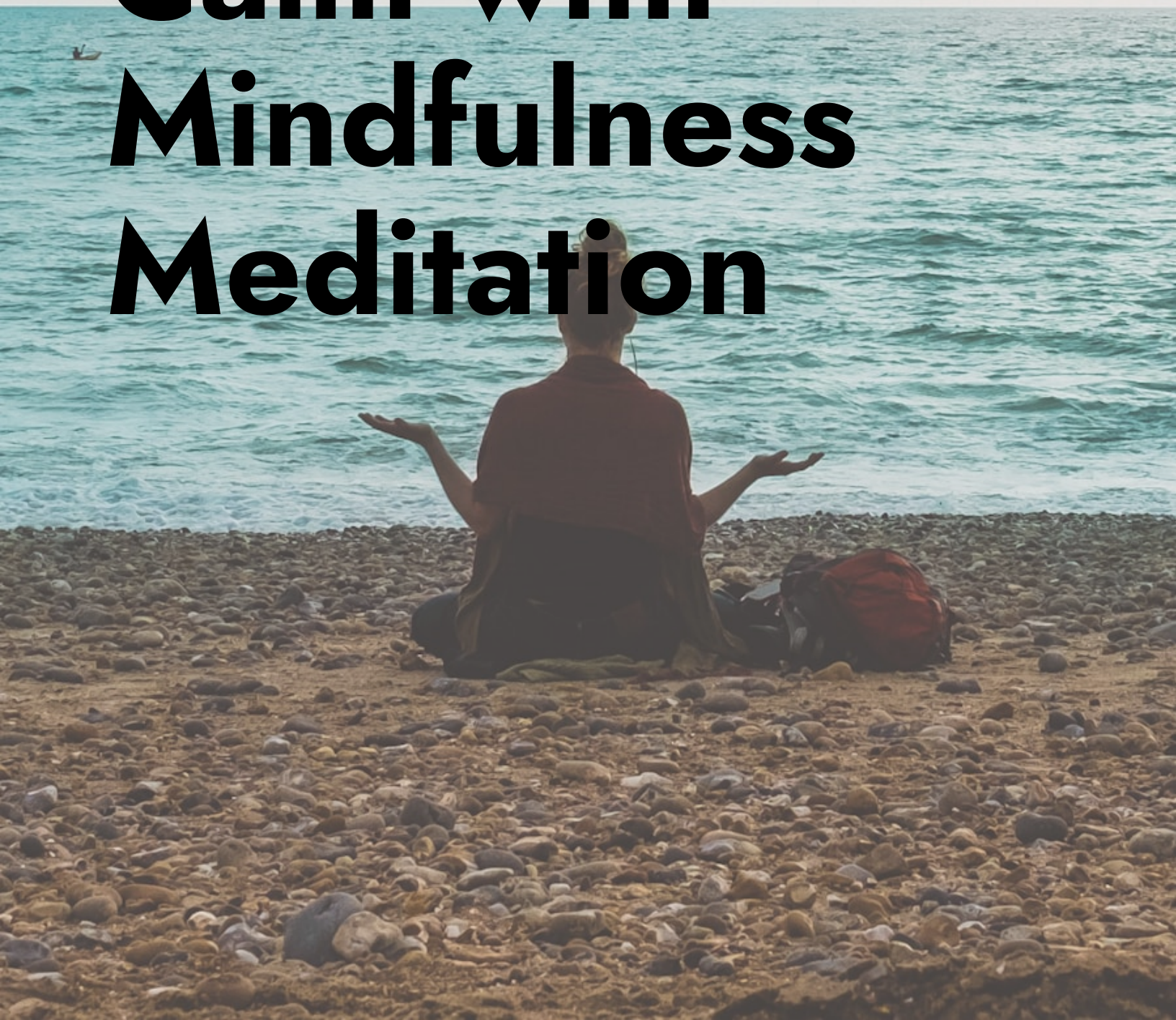
Reminder Phrase: "This anxiety"

*You can customize these scripts to fit your specific situation, using your own words to capture the essence of your stress or negative emotion. As you tap, focus on the physical sensations, thoughts, and feelings that arise, acknowledging them without judgment.*

# Tips for Success with EFT

- Be specific: The more specific you can be about the stressful situation or emotion, the more effective EFT will be.
- Use your own words: Don't worry about getting the setup statement or reminder phrase "perfect." Use language that feels authentic to you.
- Stay hydrated: Drink plenty of water before and after tapping to support your body's energy system.
- Be consistent: While you may feel relief after just one round of tapping, practicing EFT regularly can help you build resilience to stress over time.
- With practice, EFT can become a valuable self-care tool, empowering you to release stress and cultivate greater emotional balance in life's challenges.

# **Section 3: Cultivating Calm with Mindfulness Meditation**



A person with long dark hair, wearing a brown knitted top and white pants, is sitting in a meditative pose. They are holding a small wooden mallet in their right hand and a brass singing bowl in their left hand. The background is a blurred indoor space with a window showing greenery outside. The text is overlaid on the image in a white, sans-serif font.

**Mindfulness meditation is a simple yet powerful practice that involves focusing your attention on the present moment without judgment. By training your mind to observe your thoughts, feelings, and sensations with curiosity and acceptance, you can cultivate a greater sense of calm, clarity, and emotional balance.**

**Research has shown that mindfulness meditation can be highly effective in reducing stress, anxiety, and depression and improving overall well-being.**

**In this section, we'll explore a foundational mindfulness practice—breath awareness meditation—and provide guidance for incorporating it into daily life.**

# Breath Awareness Meditation: A Step-by- Step Guide

Find a quiet, comfortable space to sit undisturbed for a few minutes.

Sit comfortably on a cushion on the floor or in a chair with your feet planted on the ground. Keep your back straight but not rigid, and allow your hands to rest gently on your thighs.

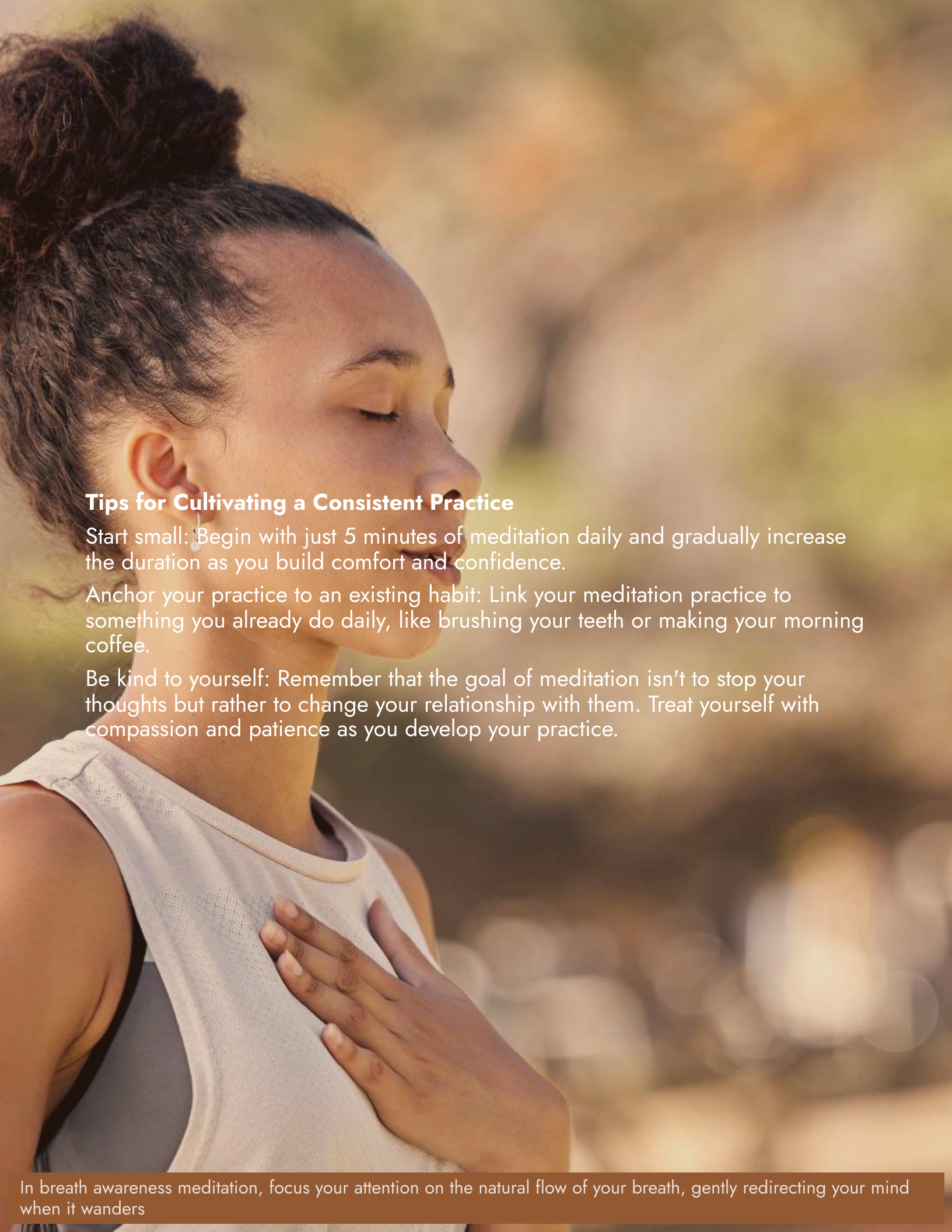
Close your eyes, lower your gaze, and take a few deep breaths to settle into your body.

Begin to notice the natural flow of your breath without trying to change or control it. Simply observe the sensation of the breath moving in and out of your body.

When your mind inevitably wanders (and it will!), gently redirect your attention back to the breath. You might silently label the distraction as “thinking” before returning to the breath.

Focus on your breath for 5-10 minutes or longer if you feel comfortable. If your mind wanders 100 times, gently bring it back to the breath 100 times, cultivating patience and self-compassion.

When you're ready to end your practice, slowly open your eyes and take a moment to notice how you feel. Carry this sense of presence and calm as you move through your day.

A close-up, profile view of a woman with dark, curly hair tied back, meditating outdoors. She has her eyes closed and a serene expression. Her right hand is resting gently on her upper chest. She is wearing a light-colored, sleeveless top. The background is a soft-focus natural setting with warm, golden light, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

### **Tips for Cultivating a Consistent Practice**

**Start small:** Begin with just 5 minutes of meditation daily and gradually increase the duration as you build comfort and confidence.

**Anchor your practice to an existing habit:** Link your meditation practice to something you already do daily, like brushing your teeth or making your morning coffee.

**Be kind to yourself:** Remember that the goal of meditation isn't to stop your thoughts but rather to change your relationship with them. Treat yourself with compassion and patience as you develop your practice.

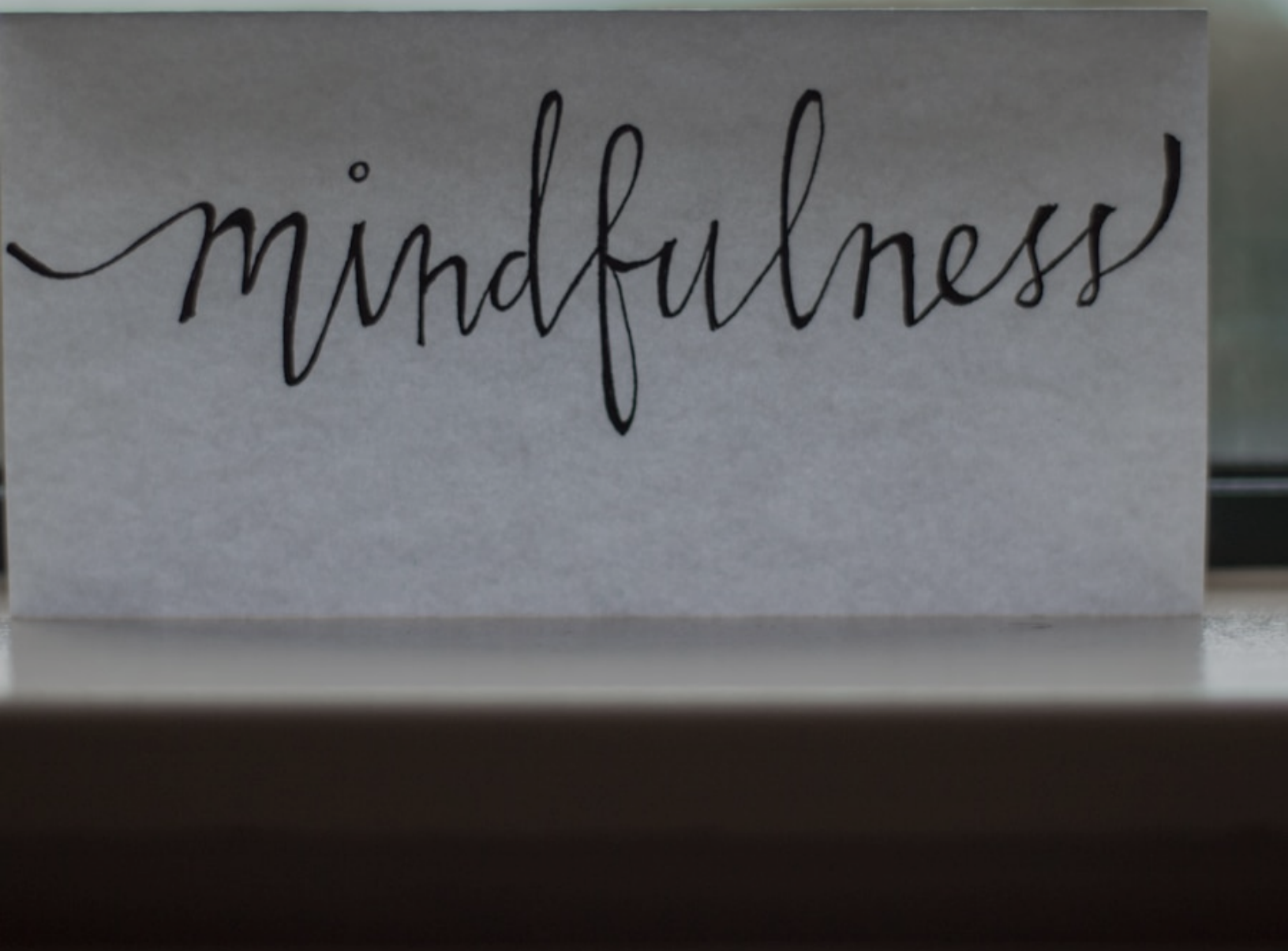
In breath awareness meditation, focus your attention on the natural flow of your breath, gently redirecting your mind when it wanders

## Mindfulness in Daily Life

In addition to formal meditation practice, you can cultivate mindfulness daily by bringing a sense of presence and curiosity to your everyday activities.

For example, you might try mindful eating, where you focus on the sensory experience of each bite of food, or mindful walking, where you pay attention to the physical sensations of each step.

By integrating mindfulness into your daily routines, you can develop a greater capacity for stress resilience and emotional well-being, even amid life's challenges.

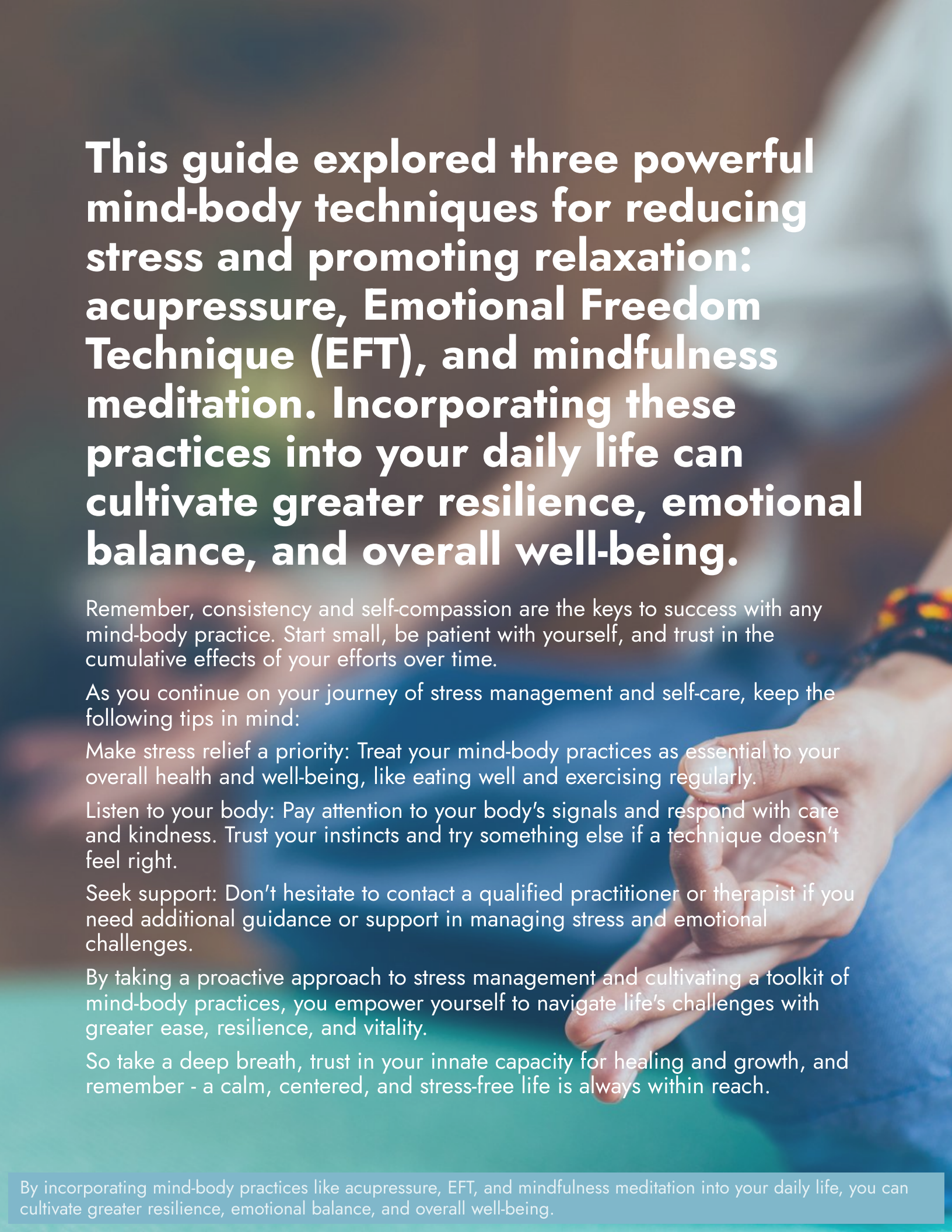


mindfulness

Practicing mindfulness in daily life, such as during meals or while walking, can help extend the benefits of meditation throughout your day.



# Conclusion: Embracing Mind-Body Wellness for Lasting Stress Relief



**This guide explored three powerful mind-body techniques for reducing stress and promoting relaxation: acupressure, Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT), and mindfulness meditation. Incorporating these practices into your daily life can cultivate greater resilience, emotional balance, and overall well-being.**

Remember, consistency and self-compassion are the keys to success with any mind-body practice. Start small, be patient with yourself, and trust in the cumulative effects of your efforts over time.

As you continue on your journey of stress management and self-care, keep the following tips in mind:

**Make stress relief a priority:** Treat your mind-body practices as essential to your overall health and well-being, like eating well and exercising regularly.

**Listen to your body:** Pay attention to your body's signals and respond with care and kindness. Trust your instincts and try something else if a technique doesn't feel right.

**Seek support:** Don't hesitate to contact a qualified practitioner or therapist if you need additional guidance or support in managing stress and emotional challenges.

By taking a proactive approach to stress management and cultivating a toolkit of mind-body practices, you empower yourself to navigate life's challenges with greater ease, resilience, and vitality.

So take a deep breath, trust in your innate capacity for healing and growth, and remember - a calm, centered, and stress-free life is always within reach.

# About the Author: Dr. Tom Ingegno, DACM

Dr. Tom Ingegno is a Doctor of Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine, integrative health specialist, author, consultant, and public speaker. He founded Charm City Integrative Health, a pioneering center renowned futurist David Houle called "The Future of Medicine."

With over 20 years of experience, Dr. Ingegno combines traditional healing modalities like acupuncture, cupping, and moxibustion with cutting-edge therapies such as cryotherapy, infrared sauna, and salt therapy. He is the author of "The Cupping Book: Unlocking the Ancient Secrets of Healing" and "You Got Sick—Now What?", offering natural remedies for colds and flus and boosting immunity.

In addition to his clinical practice, Dr. Ingegno frequently lectures on acupuncture, Chinese medicine, and integrative health topics. He has served as Chair of the Maryland State Board of Acupuncture, VP of Public Affairs for the Maryland Acupuncture Society, and Director of Acupuncture for Nava Health and Vitality Centers.

Dr. Ingegno is available for speaking engagements, book signings, media interviews, and consulting in the integrative wellness space.



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