

BODY AWARENESS AND MANAGEMENT SKILLS FOR STYLE EXCESSES

DEFINITIONS:

1. **Getting Centered:** Becoming and maintaining physical, psychological and spiritual calmness.
2. **Imaging:** Visualizing, envisioning and using your imagination to recall sights, sounds and maybe even smells of previous and/or anticipated experiences.
3. **Relaxing:** releasing physical and muscular tension.

<u>Style</u>	<u>Excess</u>	<u>Self-management Skill</u>
Accommodating / Harmonizing	<p>Becoming agitated, nervous and frantic whenever people are unfriendly and/or confrontational</p> <p>Getting off-balance as if wavering from side to side</p> <p>Procrastinating and being ambivalent</p>	<p>Deep breathing; Relaxation exercises</p> <p>Getting centered</p> <p>Imaging – visualizing yourself beginning a project and completing it in time</p>
Analyzing / Preserving	<p>Automatically responding negatively whenever confronted with something new or unexpected</p> <p>Adopting an aloof, arrogant, condescending posture</p> <p>Functioning mechanically and with-drawing from working relationships__</p> <p>Feeling forced to take action more quickly than desired</p>	<p>Deep breathing – to pause long enough to review the nearly automatic negative response</p> <p>Relaxation exercises</p> <p>Imaging - increasing the probability of being open, accessible and invested in what is happening</p> <p>Getting centered</p>
Achieving / Directing	<p>Working at a fast pace, leaving others in your dust</p> <p>Taking on too much and becoming over-extended</p> <p>Feeling out of control of a project or situation</p>	<p>Deep breathing and relaxation exercises to slow down your pace</p> <p>Imaging - to picture what all is involved in a particular commitment</p> <p>Getting centered - may make it more tolerable to just “be” rather than needing to be “on top” in every situation</p>
Affiliating / Perfecting	<p>Loss of balance and perspective</p> <p>Disappointment and alienation - “the pit”</p> <p>General intensity</p>	<p>Getting centered and deep breathing</p> <p>Imaging - visualizing the bonds and connectedness of past relationships and how they so often returned to a sense of belonging and unity</p> <p>Relaxation exercises</p>

ICS: INSTANT CALMING SEQUENCE

The ICS technique comes from martial arts training and is a simple, 5-step technique that gives the user exceptional inner control of mind, emotions, and body. It can be used whenever and wherever to keep one in the best possible physical and mental capability in the present, regardless of the crisis or stress experienced. Recent neuroscience research has confirmed the benefits of each step physiologically. The thing to remember is that, while the steps are easy to learn, it takes time and practice to master the ICS. Practice them **CONSCIOUSLY** and **REGULARLY** until they become automatic.

Practice them in the very first instant of a crisis – whether the crisis is a major incidence of violence or the quiet, nagging self-doubts that begin when team members' comments remind you of past mistakes or present weaknesses. Also, practice the sequence in the moments immediately before important situations, like when you intend to communicate something that's been weighing on your mind, or when you're standing to speak to a group or a journalist or an Army officer, or when making a critical decision.

The goal is to learn to trigger the following sequence of responses at the first sign of irritation, tension or anxiety.

1. **UNINTERRUPTED BREATHING – BREATHE!** – Unconsciously, we hold our breath in the face of crisis, which catapults us toward feelings of anxiety, panic, anger, frustration, faulty reactions, and general loss of control. So the first check is whether you are breathing, slowly, evenly, deeply, continually.
2. **POSITIVE FACE – SMILE!** – even slightly; at least be aware that your expression is a positive one, which is shown by research to increase blood flow to the brain and transmit nerve impulses to the limbic system (emotional center in the brain) changing neurochemistry toward favorable emotions. Smile with your mouth and eyes and remind yourself “alert mind, calm body.”
3. **CHECK YOUR POSTURE FOR BALANCE – STRAIGHTEN UP!** – “Somatic Retraction,” eg. doubling over when you get punched or slouching when you feel insecure or depressed, actually restricts breathing and blood flow to the brain and adds muscle tension, slows reaction time, makes one feel even more panicky and helpless (even if in seemingly minute ways.) So be aware of your posture – chest open and up, head up with jaw relaxed, shoulders loose, hips level, back straight – imagine a skyhook gently lifting your whole spinal column upward from a central point on the top of your head.
4. **WAVE OF RELAXATION - RELAX!** – with one fast sweep of you mind, do a “muscle scan” to locate unnecessary tension. Doing so, you flash a “wave of relaxation” through your body, like standing under a warm shower when you're cold. Don't relax so much that you lose your balanced posture, but enough to feel calmness.
5. **MENTAL CONTROL – FOCUS!** – “Acknowledge Reality” is the suggested mental focus for response to sudden challenge. Don't get caught up bemoaning whatever challenge you are facing, avoid “Analysis Paralysis.” If you try to wish away the situation, take time to regret that you don't feel prepared, dwell on your anger at unfairness, etc. you actually increase your loss of control by loading up with anxiety and frustration. So practice this thought: “What's happening is real and I'm finding the best solution possible right now.” Then focus your mind on what options you have. With practice, you can focus on what you can control rather than what you can't (i.e. your responses and attitude, not anyone else's). In the first split second of a crisis, the nervous system reacts – and can choose a panic-paralysis or a positive-action response. This is where we choose to learn from something instead of simply react to it, to listen openly rather than blindly respond, to think clear and honest thoughts rather than distorted ones.

So, how to practice the ICS? Try thinking of the areas of your life which you associated with especially stressful thoughts or emotions. Select one problem situation where you could use the ICS. Vividly imagine the circumstances mentally, play a slow-motion videotape backwards in your head until you catch the very first signal that the situation is starting to distract or hurt you. This is the key moment – write down a short phrase or sentence – the “red flag” that gives you the first clue that a stress onslaught feels imminent. **THIS** is precisely where you need to begin inserting the ICS. You can repeat the imaging with other situations to find other tipoff places in which to practice.