

Bodywork and Grounding Exercises

4-7-8 Breathing

This simple breathing technique helps **activate the parasympathetic nervous system**, reduce anxiety, and support a sense of calm. It works by **extending the exhalation**, which stimulates the **vagus nerve** and slows the heart rate.

You'll get the most benefit if you practise regularly - especially in the lead-up to a stressful event like a **PIP assessment**.

How to Do It:

1. **Inhale** through your nose for a count of **4**
2. **Hold** your breath for a count of **7** (if comfortable)
3. **Exhale** slowly through pursed lips for a count of **8**

Repeat for a few cycles. The goal is to breathe **slowly and gently**.

If you feel lightheaded or dizzy, take a break and return to your natural breath.

Cold Water for Instant Calm

Cold facial stimulation can quickly calm the body by activating the **mammalian diving reflex**, a natural response that slows the heart rate and stimulates vagus nerve pathways. This helps shift the body into a **rest-and-digest** state.

Research by **Jungmann et al. (2018)** showed that even brief cold exposure to the face can significantly increase **vagal tone**, which supports parasympathetic activity and emotional regulation.

How to Do It:

- Hold your breath and gently **submerge your face in cold water** (a bowl or sink works well) for **5–10 seconds**
- Or, apply a **cold pack or cool damp cloth** to your **forehead and cheeks**

Repeat **1–3 times as needed** to support a calm, grounded state.

Gentle Calm Yoga - 6 Minutes

A short, gentle yoga practice designed to bring quick calm and ease, perfect for moments when you need immediate grounding.

[Watch it on YouTube](#)

Somatic Movement for Bed-bound Folks - 20 Minutes

A slow, gentle somatic exercise session tailored for those who are mostly bed-bound, helping to bring increased body awareness and release tension.

[Watch it on YouTube](#)