

# Let the Pendulum Swing - Tension to Release

In this practice, by focusing your attention, you're allowing your brain to relax so that your nervous system can reset itself back into equilibrium.

Our bodies learn, and they hold all kinds of tension and stress, including traumatic stress.

This **5-step practice** involves pausing for moments to feel sensations, then toggling between states of negative tension and positive release. Doing so will allow your body to rewire body-based memories of your tense, negative experiences.

## There are 5 steps:

- 1) Take a few moments to **find a place in your body where you're holding tension** around a recent negative, unpleasant event, or even a traumatic one. Notice your physical sensations--tightening of the jaw, churning of the stomach, tight shoulders.
- 2) **Now locate a place in your body where you don't currently register any distress or at all--** a big toe, elbow, pinky finger. Notice sensations in these areas too: a calm ease, relaxation, maybe even a sense of safety. If you're feeling at all charged up now, this window might be small, yet focus your attention on the calm place in your body and welcome the ease there.
- 3) Now, **on purpose toggle between the physical sensations of pleasantness in the non-stressed areas of your body and the unpleasant sensations** in your body where you might be holding stress & trauma.
- 4) **Allow yourself to stay with the sensations** in each area for 30-60 seconds before shifting. If the unpleasant seems 'too much,' trust yourself to shift when it feels right for you.
- 5) **Toggle back and forth between pleasant and unpleasant for a few rounds**, gradually increasing the amount of time you spend focusing on the pleasant experience. Notice how the unpleasant sensations shift or fade.

When the intensity of the unpleasant does shift or fades a bit, pause to reflect on your entire experience.

By practicing this kind of pendulum toggling, you're increasing your ability to be with difficult, unpleasant sensations, building resilience simply through your body sensations alone (no story required), and broadening your perspective-taking skills.

