

welcome to transomatics: a practice for trans and gender-non-conforming people to have some space and time to explore the relationship we have with our bodies - by which I mean, not bodies as in gendered ones, but bodies as in the physical shapes that let us exist in this world: our skin, our muscles, our bones, our breath.

Find a comfortable seated position, maybe on a cushion, the floor or on a chair, and close your eyes for a moment. Just to let your awareness sink down into your body, noticing how it feels to sit, perhaps noticing the air around you, maybe the sunlight on your skin. Take some time here just to observe what it feels like.

This practice was developed and recorded on the unceded, sovereign lands of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nations. I pay my respect to the Elders of this land, past and present, and extend my allegiance to all First Nations people in their fight against the colonial project known as Australia. If, like me, you are an uninvited guest on Indigenous land, I invite you to take a moment here to consider how you support First Nations people in your day life, and where you can do more.

before we begin, it is important to remind ourselves of the three intentions of this practice.

- safety. we are practicing in not judging our selves or our bodies. we are practicing in exploring bodily sensations. we are practicing in soft observation and experimentation.
- non-violence. nothing in this practice should hurt. all of the movement should be soft, at your own speed, to your own interpretation. remember that you are the expert on your own body.
- slow. we are practicing in mindfulness. the practice of sinking into our bodies requires moving away from our busy daily minds. when we let our mind and body sink, we can unlock and explore bodily wisdom which we may otherwise not be able to access.

if you ever reach a point that is uncomfortable for you, stop. you may choose to just lay still for a moment, pause this recording, or walk away from it all together. and if you would like to talk to me about it, you can reach out using the contact details in the description of this recording. i want to emphasise that the practice involves observing without judgement. we want to explore our bodies, just to understand this part of ourselves. we want to observe with kindness and patience.

One more thing, please know that any guidance I give is just a suggestion. Please feel free to honour whatever your body asks you to do, and take only what you want from this practice.

for this episode, we want to focus on the breath. we will be staying seated for the most part, with an optional shift near the end to your hands and knees. Breathing is such a funny thing- it is so easy to forget we do it constantly from birth to death, even though it is the most vital part of keeping our physical existence alive. Something wonderful about the breath, is that it is the easiest way to bring yourself into the present moment. You cannot breathe into the past, nor into the future. With each inhale () and with each exhale)(you are in this very moment.

Still seated comfortably, I invite you to place one hand on your belly, and one on your heart. bringing your attention to the breath, just feel how your body moves- expanding with each breath in, deflating with each breath out. Perhaps experiment with breathing in to different parts of the body- into the belly, into the chest. letting the movement of the breath guide you.

While we're here, let's take three deep breaths together. Breathing in through the nose, holding it for just a second, and exhaling with a sigh.

Again, breathe in through the nose, hold for a moment, and release through your mouth.

One more time- breath in, hold, and a long breath out. release something. let it go.

Your breath is your body's natural rhythm - it is what pushes and pulls all the flows throughout your body- from the movement of your ribs as the lungs expand, the beating of your heart, and the flow of blood through your veins as the oxygen you breathe in replenishes your muscles, ligaments and organs. the breath such an amazing, little thing. each cycle, a gift to the body.

for this next part, we want to follow our body's natural rhythm as we move. with an inhale, bring your arms high above your head, stretching up and letting your ribs and spine extend. Stay here a moment, before bringing everything back down with an breath out, letting to. If you like, repeat this movement two more times, just getting a feel for the body, noticing the different areas in yourself you might feel your breath as you move.

Taking your arms up as you breathe in, stay a moment, and release.

And once more coming up, pause, release with a sigh.

Now bringing your left hand to the floor next to you or resting it on the side of your chair, float just the right arm up on your inhale, and then gently lean over to the left as you exhale. Stay here in this side bend for a few moments, still staying focussed on your breath. Coming up a bit as you inhale, and perhaps sinking a little deeper with each exhale.

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to come back up, let your breath guide you. breathe in as your right arm leads your body back into a neutral seated position, and then bring both your hands to your lap for a few breaths. just feeling any residual sensations, perhaps breathing into the right side of your body.

we're then going to repeat the same movements on the other side, reminding ourselves that often each side will feel different from the other. we bring our right hand to the floor next to us or to the side fo the chair, and then raise the left arm on an inhale. stretch it up a little higher, before exhaling as you lean to the right. check in with your neck and make sure it is comfortable and not feeling tense. stay here a few moments, letting each breath bring you deeper, each exhale letting you release a little more.

again, let your inhale guide you back into a neutral sitting position, rest your hands in your lap, and take your time observing any sensations in the body. remembering to just observe, and withhold any judgement. we are simply sitting with our bodies in this moment, with gentleness.

once more, let's take a breath in, and on the exhale, let something go.

this next part is about breathing in to different parts of the spine. you can either stay seated as you are, and place your hands on your knees, or move into a table top position- which is to be on your hands and knees. you want your knees right below your hips, and your hands in line with your shoulders. whether you are sitting or in table top, the sensations will be quite similar, so choose a position most comfortable for you in this moment.

as always, we are letting the breath guide us and tell us what rhythm to take as we move. so on your next inhale, roll your shoulders back and let your back arch. let your neck stretch long, either gazing forwards or slightly up. perhaps stay a moment, or let your exhale lead your body into the reverse- so curling your back inwards, chin tucking into the neck. Following the rhythm of your breath, let your body arch up on an inhale, curl into itself on an exhale. all the while, just feel any sensations that come up, honour them, and let them go as you continue to breathe through it all. maybe close your eyes as you move, and just experience the movement and most importantly the breath as it flows through you.

Perhaps you start to notice, that the shapes you take change your breath. curling into yourself give your lungs less space to fill up, arching back give you more. notice your shoulders, and how they move with you. give yourself the freedom to breathe comfortably, notice how your breath and your body can work together to find openness.

It's easy to think that the mind controls the body, but really its the other way around. 80% of all communication between the body and the mind flows upwards- that is from the rest of body to the brain. if we can find the safety to let ourselves go, we can move freely- we don't need to think about it. your body is such a beautiful thing. it is graceful, clever, hard-working and a friend.

perhaps you have stopped moving by now, perhaps moved on to different shapes. I'd invite you, wherever you are right now with your body, to give yourself a squeeze. maybe hugging your knees towards you, or wrapping your arms around your chest. Give your body some love and compassion, give yourself some love and compassion. and just to finish off, let's take one more deep breath together, and on the exhale, we're going to let go of any and everything that we don't need in this moment.

breathing deeply into every facet of ourselves, and, maybe with a sigh, let it all go.
