

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.

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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.

And 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.

In this episode, we are going to be exploring the breath. we will be seated for the first half, and then also do some movement while standing. in moments of fear or stress, the breath can feel constricting. this happens when the rhythm of the breath becomes quicker and shallow, and when our body closes upon itself, giving less space for the breath. often subconsciously, we can take positions that constrict our breath in day to day life. especially if we have a complicated relationship to our bodies. so, for the next 15 or so minutes, we want to very gently explore ways we can open up the body a bit, to make the breath come more easily. deep breaths are a balm on the body and mind, let's find some soothing.

still seated comfortably, let's start by taking some breaths together. just taking some time to bring your awareness to the movement of air through your body, and observing its natural rhythm. noticing how you breathe in, sensing your lungs expand and your ribs give space for them. be aware of ripples of movement throughout the body that come from the breath - maybe into your shoulders and arms, your back, or how it changes the way your body feels against the floor or your chair. again, not okaying any value on these movements, simply acknowledging them as they come and go.

now that we have an understanding of the breath's rhythm, let's start moving with it. begin with some simple shoulder rolls- bring both shoulders forwards then up towards your ears, and letting them glide back down, sensing your shoulder blades along your back. match the movement with your breath - shoulders go up as you inhale, and come back down as you exhale. you might start to feel warmth spread along your upper back as your muscles work, and a loosening of tension you might be holding in your shoulders and neck. gently let it go.

maybe take a moment now to change direction, pushing your shoulder back before they come up to meet your ears, and curling into your chest a little as you go. keep your breath front of mind, move with your body's natural rhythm and let each movement in your shoulders become in sync with your inhale () and exhale (). there is no rule here for how fast or slow your breath should be, we want to follow the body instead of telling it what to do. let it be how it needs to be in this moment.

hopefully feeling a bit looser now, let your shoulders find their resting place and take a moment to just sit with any changing sensations in your body. just noticing them, acknowledging them, and letting them go. maybe on the next exhale, release something.

bringing your hands to your knees, use them to support you in this next part. bringing your focus to your sternum, the bone in the centre of your chest, imagine there is a string attached to it that pulls you forward. as always, follow your breath's rhythm, use the inhale to give in to the string and let your chest open up, letting your ribs fall back and perhaps a small arch in your lower back. be mindful of your head and neck, and make sure you keep them supported but not strained. pull back a bit if you need to.

on the exhale, reverse the movement and curl all the way into yourself- your belly going towards your spine, your shoulders come forward, your head bows down and your chest closes.

moving with your breath, and always being gentle with yourself, let your chest open up on an inhale, and close back in on itself on an exhale. move gently through the shapes, taking all the time you need to move comfortably, and to feel any of the sensations your body gives.

focusing on the breath is the best way to be in the present. you cannot breathe into the past, or into the future. only right now. each breath gives your body nutrients it needs to

move forward, to operate, to live. treat each breath as a magical gift you give yourself, give your body.

when you are ready, come back to stillness. maybe while in stillness your body notices movements it needs to do, and please honour them. maybe shifting from side to side, repositioning your legs, a few more shoulder rolls or stretching out the neck. whatever you feel your body call for, or what you think would feel good right now.

and then when you're ready, we're going gently to stand up. stand with your feet slightly apart, inline with your hips. bring a hand to your belly and a hand to your heart, and just take a moment to feel your breath. feel how it moves your body, notice how it might feel different to breathe standing rather than sitting.

now, let your hands rest by your side, or bring them up to your hips to help with stability. moving with the breath, we're going to explore a simple swaying movement. coming slightly forwards on the inhale, and rocking back on the exhale. perhaps eventually coming to lifting your heels of the ground and rise up onto your toes on the inhale, coming back down on the exhale. take this movement wherever you want it to be for you in this moment.

and after a few more sways back and forth, come to stillness for a moment to take stock of any changes in the body. breathe into the body, and in the exhale, release something.

you can bring your hands back to up to feel the breath- one hand on the belly and one hand on the sternum- the bone at the centre of the chest. and then recall the movement we did earlier- opening and closing the chest. let's have a go here standing of feeling the string attached to our sternum, and as you inhale, let it pull you up and forwards, opening all the way. on the exhale, close into yourself, gentle letting your upper body curl inwards. again, repeat this movement a few more times, remembering to be gentle and attentive to your body and listen to its needs in this moment.

breathing into space and openness, then compressing in on yourself to exhale.

how does this feel different than when done sitting? have you started involving other parts of your body, like your legs and feet? has it changed how your breath feels?

when you're ready, gently come back to stillness. and then you can come back to your seated position, or lie down on your back if that feels like a good option at the moment. wherever you are, continue to witness the breath, let it flow in and out of your body. notice any sensations that feel different now. use the exhale to release anything that it is time to let go of. let each inhale breathe new life into you.