

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 will move through a sequence between sitting, on hands and knees, and standing. Repeating sequences of movement, also known as a flow, helps us become in sync with the body, be present in this moment, and makes it easier embed bodily patterns and sensations into our daily lives. Having movements to focus on can slow our busy minds, and gently push all other thoughts out of the present moment. I find it especially useful when I am struggling to connect with my body to work through movement, as it allows me to feel how different parts work together, how sensations ripple through me. doing these movements slowly, intentionally and with curiosity will give you the best somatic experience in terms of feeling your body from the inside.

staying seated, let's start by finding our breath. close your eyes, and if you like you can place a hand on your belly and a hand on your ribs or chest. just feel how the breath comes and go in its natural rhythm, without forcing any changes to it. it if naturally becomes deeper as you sit here, let it. bring the breath to the centre of your awareness. for every movement we do, we want to be doing it to the rhythm of the breath- moving on the inhale, and on the exhale.

let's start by folding, leaning or rocking forward, so that you can come to your hands and knees. we're going to do three rounds of what is known as cat and cow- arching and curling our backs. on your inhale, roll the shoulders back, lift up your head and your buttocks, drop your belly and push your hands into the ground to reach an arch - this is your cow. stay here a moment if you like, or reverse this shape on the exhale, still pushing your hands into the ground, rolling your shoulders forward, head bows down and chin tucks into your chest as your back rounds - this is your cat. Remember to move in ways that are comfortable to you, remember to be gentle with yourself, and to sense and acknowledge anything that happens in your body with curiosity and no judgement.

Let's come back into the arched cat shape on your inhale, rolling the shoulders back, heads comes up and back arches a little. and on your exhale, curling into the cat shape. take your time, move with your own breath.

once, more arch up into the cow shape on an inhale, stay a moment, and the exhale into the curled shape of the cat.

if you like, stay on your hand and knees a moment longer, listening to your body and moving in whatever way feels good right now. maybe shifting your hips from side to side, rocking forwards and back... see if there is anything your body is asking you for right now in this moment.

and then when you're ready, see if you can lean or rock back until you are sitting on your knees or crouching with your feet on the ground, knees up and your hands on the floor for support. we're going to very slowly curl up until standing. trying to go vertebrae by vertebrae. let your arms and head become heavy, have a generous bend in your knees, and with each exhale, let something go. slowly rising up, the head the last thing to come up. be gentle on your back.

once your standing, let your arms rest by your side, take a moment with your eyes closed to just take stock of your body and how it feels in this moment. then you can take your arms up above your head your hands together. Lift up a little, and then gently lean back as you inhale, arching your upper back. make this a subtle arch.

exhaling now, fold all the way forward, coming back to the ground. find your seated position. we're now back at the beginning of the sequence. once more, let's re-centre on the breath, taking a few breaths here, just noticing how it flows through our bodies, and then is released.

then we're coming forward to our hands and knees, and come into the arched cow pose on the inhale. stay a moment, and then exhale in the curled cat pose. push into the ground with your hands and knees, to make the shapes of your spine a little deeper.

repeat a few more times, inhale into the arch of the cow, exhale to curl into the cat shape. keep your breath at the centre of your focus, the movements come after. move slowly, so you can feel all the mechanisms in your body work as you move.

lean back onto your knees or crouching on your heels, and slowly begin to rise up to standing. remember to keep a bend in your knees, let your arms and head become heavy, and breathe into your spine. feel that stretch along your upper back as you slowly curl up, breathe into it. remember to take it easy and be gentle on yourself, don't do anything that isn't comfortable for you in this moment.

Reaching standing, take a moment to rest and feel any sensations wash over your body. maybe breathe in some appreciation for all your body can do, how it holds you, is always there. raising both arms above your head, hands together, lift the upper body up a little more and lean back into a soft arch. exhale as you make your way back towards the floor, find your seated position to go one last round.

close your eyes, centre your breath in your focus. feel as it flows in and out of your body, moves your body. on an exhale, release something, let it go.

once more, coming forwards onto hands and knees, three rounds of cat and cow. arching into cow on an inhale, exhaling to curl into cat. going at your own speed, to your breath's rhythm. take your time to feel what your body is doing, how each movement feels. last inhale into cat now, hold a moment before exhaling and curling into cow. from here, leaning back onto your heels or knees, ready to slowly curl up into standing. remembering to breathe into your back, let your head hang, keep your knees bent. head is the last thing to come up.

a moment to take stock and acknowledge what your body is feeling, an exhale to let something go.

bringing your arms up, hands together, lift a little higher and softly arch the upper back as you inhale. exhale to come back down towards the ground.

now, instead of coming back to seated, you might want to lie on your back, placing your hands right below your ribs on the diaphragm, or resting by your side. these next few moments are to feel the body. whatever is coursing through it at this moment, whatever you are feeling. breathe in what you need, release what needs to be released.

perhaps you want to reflect on the body, what it does for you, and what you can do for it. movement and movement with breath is a nice, gentle way to get in touch with the body, to feel what it is doing, feel what it is holding for you. maybe you noticed some tensions that can be worked out, some stiffness that can be relaxed. becoming in sync with our body through breath can teach us so much.

lastly, as you rest a little while longer, breathe in some love and care for your body. it is strong, clever and supple. it might not always be easy to get along, but i take comfort in the fact that no matter how much we fight, my body and I are always there for each other at the end of the day. someone to hold and be held by. it can be really magical when we work together.

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