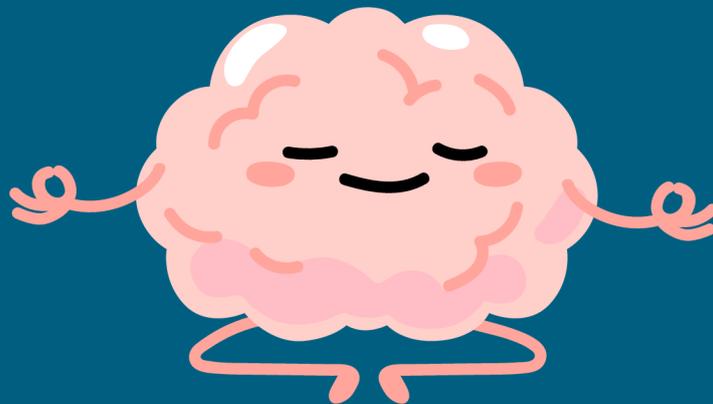


14- Day Calm & Grounded Challenge for Parents

A Gentle 14-Day Journey for Busy Parents



14-Day Calm & Grounding Challenge for Parents

A Gentle 14-Day Journey for Busy Parents

Introduction

Welcome to your 14-Day Calm & Grounding Challenge.

This simple programme is designed to help you and your child feel calmer, reduce stress and build habits that support your wellbeing.

Contents

[How our Nervous System Works](#)

[The Role of Our Nervous System](#)

[A Calm Nervous System](#)

[Why This Challenge Is for You](#)

[Why 10 Minute Activities Work](#)

[How to Complete this Challenge](#)

[Day 1: Deep Breathing](#)

[Day 2: Grounding & Mindfulness](#)

[Day 3: Soothing Sounds](#)

[Day 4: Walk, Dance or Move](#)

[Day 5: Progressive Muscle Relaxation](#)

[Day 6: Release Your Anxiety](#)

[Day 7: Visualisation](#)

[Day 8: Safe Affirmations](#)

[Day 9: Havening Technique](#)

[Day 10: Using Bilateral Stimulation](#)

[Day 11: Journaling Calm](#)

[Day 12: Connecting with Your Inner Child](#)

[Day 13: Warm Bath or Shower](#)

[Day 14: Vagal Nerve Stimulation with Gentle Humming or Chanting](#)

[Challenge Reflection](#)

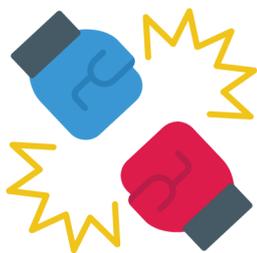
How Our Nervous System Works

When we feel stressed or overwhelmed, our nervous system goes into “fight, flight, or freeze” mode.

This is a survival mechanism we have in our brain from prehistoric days where if we were going to be attacked by a dangerous animal we would either have to run away (Flight) or fight it (Fight) or literally freeze so we wouldn't be eaten!

Its basically a mechanism to keep us alive.

Our brains main job is to keep us alive so it is constantly scanning the world like a lighthouse for things that might be a danger to us. Once it finds something it sends your body a signal of fear to protect itself by releasing the emotion of anxiety to your nervous system.



The Role of Our Nervous System

The Sympathetic Nervous System

When you're scared or stressed, your nervous system tells your body to get ready to protect yourself (this is called the "Flight, Fight or Freeze" response)

To prepare our bodies to either fight the threat or run away from the threat the body produces extra adrenaline.

The Para Sympathetic Nervous System

When you're calm, your nervous system helps your body relax, slow down and feel safe again.

It helps you survive danger and feel peaceful when things are okay.

Your nervous system is like your body's control centre. It helps you respond to stress, danger, rest and relaxation.

When life feels overwhelming — loud kids, tight schedules, constant demands — your nervous system can slip into "fight or flight" mode.

That's when you might feel:

- Snappy or irritated
- Anxious or panicky
- Tense in your body
- Like you're just surviving



A Calm Nervous System

Our body reacts to these situations in the same way as if we are in real danger unless we learn to pause, breathe, and tell our brain: I am safe.”

But staying in that stressed state too long isn't good for your health, your mood, or your parenting.

We often believe that changing and controlling the outside world will make us feel better, but in reality, it's the opposite. The more we find calm within ourselves, the more peaceful and manageable the outside world begins to feel.

**A calm nervous system = a calmer parent
= calmer children**

You can calm your nervous system down — and it only takes a few minutes a day.

Simple tools send a signal to your brain: “I'm safe now. I can relax.”:

- Deep breathing
- Gentle movement
- Grounding exercises
- Positive self-talk

This helps you:

- Feel more calm and in control
- Sleep better
- Handle challenges with more patience

Why This Challenge Is for You

This 14-day challenge is for you. Not just the 'parent' version of you juggling schedules and emotions — but the real, human you who also deserves calm, care, and breathing space.

These short, daily activities are designed to:

- Help you feel calmer and more in control
- Bring you back to the present moment
- Reduce stress, tension, and emotional overload
- Remind you that your needs matter too

No pressure. No perfection. Just 10 minutes a day to slow down, reset, and take a small step towards feeling better.

We suggest 14 days to try something new because it typically takes around that time to build a habit and start noticing real changes.

This period is long enough to allow your mind and body to adjust, but not so long that it feels overwhelming.

By committing to 14 days, you give yourself a consistent, focused timeframe to practice new behaviors, which helps make positive change more sustainable and natural.

It's like giving yourself a full cycle to reset and grow.

A few gentle reminders:

- There's no right or wrong way to do this
- If you miss a day, just pick-up from where you left off
- You can repeat activities or swap them to suit your needs
- This is about progress, not perfection



Why These 10-Minute Daily Activities Actually Work

Being a parent is rewarding — but let's be honest, it's also a lot. These small daily activities are designed to help you feel calmer, more confident, and more like yourself again. And here's the best part: they only take around 10 minutes a day.

So why do these little things make such a big difference?

1) They calm your nervous system

When life gets hectic (hello! school runs and endless “mum, mum, mum!”), your body goes into stress mode — your heart races, your mind spins, and patience flies out the window.

Taking just a few deep breaths or having a quiet moment actually tells your brain: “You're safe now.”

This helps you feel more relaxed and respond to your children with more calm.

2) They help you get out of your head

We often worry about the future (“Am I doing enough?”) or beat ourselves up over the past (“I lost my temper again”).

These activities bring you back to now — the only moment you can control.

Even drinking your coffee slowly or noticing your surroundings can quiet that noisy inner critic.



3) They rewire negative thinking

If you often think, “I’m not doing a good job,” your brain starts to believe it. But when you flip that thought to something like, “I’m learning every day,” your brain starts believing that instead.

The way you talk to yourself really matters.

4) They show you that you matter too

You give a lot to your family. These small acts of care are reminders that your needs, emotions, and dreams still matter — not just as a parent, but as a person.

A 10-minute reset can stop burnout before it starts.

5) They help you feel more confident

Whether it’s writing down your wins, wearing something you love, or saying something kind to yourself, these are gentle nudges to remind you of who you are and what you’re capable of. You’ve got more strength than you realise — these activities help you see it again.

6) Little things add up

Think of it like watering a plant. One drop a day doesn’t seem like much — but over time, the plant grows strong and healthy. These 10-minute habits work the same way. They don’t need to be perfect — just consistent.

Small steps really can change how you feel.

You don’t have to “fix” everything. You don’t need hours of free time. You just need a few quiet moments a day to come back to yourself.



How to Complete the Challenge

Pick a time every day around the same time to do these exercises. They should not take more than 5-10 minutes a day. First thing in the morning or last thing at night is probably the best time.

Throughout the day if you can add in any of the exercises even better. The more you do them the more change starts to take place.

Remember there are 1440 minutes in a day. You have the right and deserve to take 10 minutes out of those for yourself!

Week 3 and 4 are a repetition of week 1 and 2. What we repeat and do more often becomes habit. Having too many practices can become overwhelming so I want to make this simple for you.

Doing something over a 14 day period really can start to rewire your brain to think. Differently so try and do the full 14 days.

'Endure the challenge now, and life will reward you with simplicity later.'

This challenge may feel difficult to start with but it will make life so much calmer for you and your family on the other end.



Day 1: Deep Breathing

Activity:

Take 10 slow, deep breaths. Breathe in through your nose for 4 counts, hold for 4, out through your mouth for 8 counts. Make a loud sigh when you breath out.

Why it works:

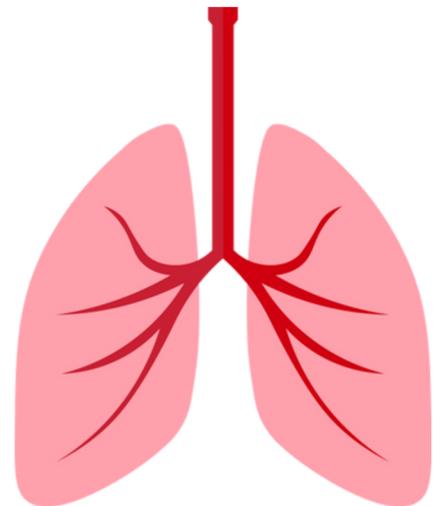
Deep breathing signals your body to relax and lowers stress. It tells your brain I am safe. It is our most natural way to calm down.

Activity: Breath Counting

Breathe normally and silently count each breath from 1 to 10, then start again.

Why it works:

Counting breath keeps your mind focused and reduces worry.



Day 2: Grounding & Mindfulness

Activity:

Name 5 things you see, 4 things you hear, 3 things you feel, 2 things you smell, 1 thing you taste.

Alternative activities

Mindful Eating can help with this. Another activity you can do is Eat one small snack slowly, noticing the taste, texture, and smell fully.

Why it works:

Mindful eating slows you down and focuses your mind, reducing stress.

Why it works:

Grounding brings your focus to the present moment and calms racing thoughts. Most of our worries and stresses are about things that are going to happen in the future or things that have happened in the past. This brings your mind back into the present moment

Activity:

Enjoy a warm cup of tea or another drink slowly and mindfully.

Why it works:

Warm drinks have a soothing effect on the nervous system.

Day 3: Soothing Sounds

Activity:

Listen to calming music, nature sounds, or gentle rain for 10 minutes. Find a video on YouTube.

Why it works:

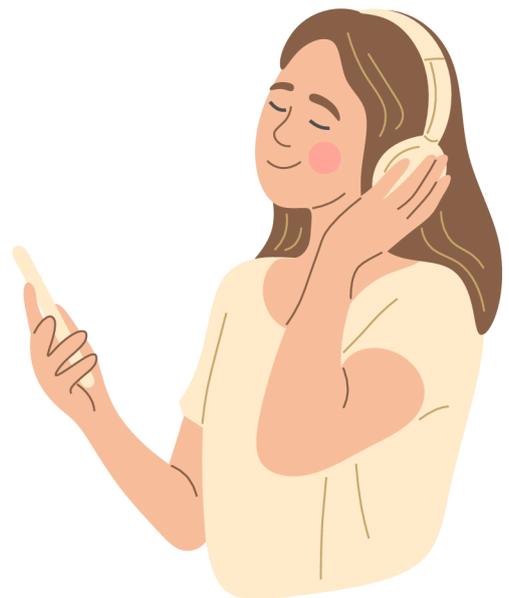
Soothing sounds help calm your nervous system and improve mood. Music also helps to lower cortisol levels

Activity:

Listen to recorded nature sounds (waves, birds, rain) mindfully.

Why it works:

Nature sounds help your brain shift to a calm state.



Day 4: Walk, Dance or Move

Activity:

Take a 10-minute walk outside. Have a 10 minute dance. Jump up and down.

Why it works:

Movement is so important. When we are in stress mode we have extra adrenaline pumping through us. Any form of movement will help to release that. Emotions are just energy in motion.



Day 5: Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Activity:

Tense each muscle group for 5 seconds, then relax it, moving from feet to head.

Why it works:

Alternating tension and relaxation helps your muscles and mind release stress.

Activity:

Do gentle stretches for your neck, shoulders, arms, and back.

Why it works:

Stretching releases muscle tension and improves blood flow.

Activity: Body scan

Slowly focus on each part of your body from toes to head, noticing any tension and gently relaxing it.

Why it works:

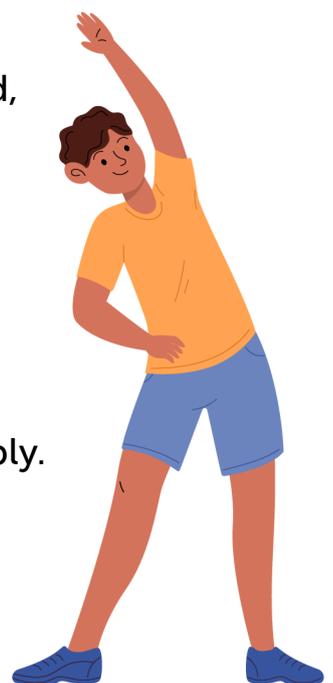
Body awareness helps release tension and brings calm.

Activity: Gentle stretch & breathe

Stretch your body gently while breathing slowly and deeply.

Why it works:

This calms your muscles and nervous system together.



Day 6: Release Your Anxiety

Activity:

Sit quietly for 5 minutes and notice how you feel. Accept your feelings and listen to the emotion. After 5 minutes, imagine saying goodbye to it.

Why it works:

Emotions exist for a reason—they give us information about our needs, fears, or boundaries. By acknowledging and accepting anxiety rather than fighting it, we allow it to be processed.

The act of consciously “saying goodbye” helps signal to your mind and body that it’s safe to let go, making the anxiety fade more quickly.

Activity: Body shake out

Gently shake your hands, arms, and legs to release tension. When you notice an emotion like anxiety, imagine shaking it out of your body. Remember: emotions are energy in motion.

Why it works:

Physical movement helps release stored tension and stress from the body. Shaking encourages the body to let go of anxious energy, supporting emotional regulation and helping you feel lighter and more grounded.

Day 7: Visualisation

Activity:

1) Close your eyes and imagine a safe, peaceful place. It could be real or imagined—somewhere that makes you feel calm and happy.

2) Stay in this place for 5–10 minutes. Notice the details: What do you see? Hear? Smell? Feel?

Reflection prompt:

Write down what your calm place looks like. How does being here make you feel?

Why it works:

Visualisation sends signals to your brain that you are safe. Even if it's imaginary, your body responds as if it's real, helping you relax and feel calm.



Activity: Visualisation with breath

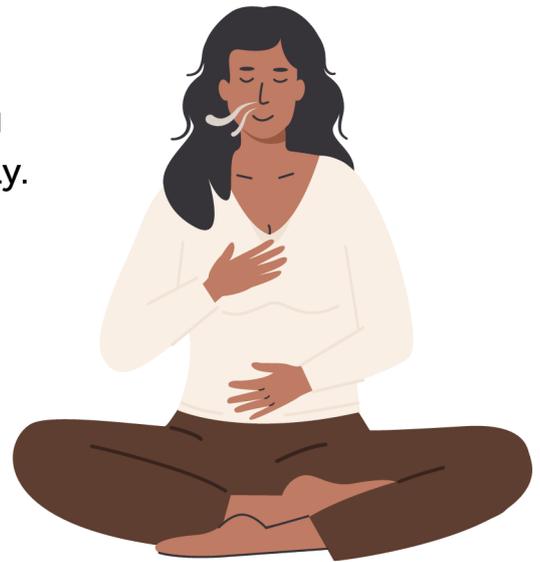
- 1) Close your eyes and picture your calm place.
- 2) Take slow, deep breaths in and out while you stay there for 5–10 minutes.

Reflection prompt:

Notice how your body feels after combining your calm place with deep breathing. What changes do you feel in your mind or body?

Why it works:

Breathing deeply while imagining calm strengthens the relaxation response, helping tension and stress melt away more effectively.



Day 8: Safe Affirmations

Affirmations are positive statements you repeat to yourself to shift your mindset and calm anxious thoughts.

They work by:

- Rewiring the brain – replacing negative self-talk with kind supportive words.
- Creating calm – repeating soothing phrases helps the body relax.
- Reprogramming negative beliefs that you are not safe

Examples of calming affirmations for parents:

- "I am safe and in control right now."
- "I can handle challenges one step at a time."
- "I am calm, strong, and capable."
- "This feeling will pass, and I will be okay."
- "I choose peace over worry."



How to use them:

- Repeat out loud or silently when feeling anxious.
- Write them in a journal.
- Stick them on post-it notes around your home.
- Use them with deep breaths (say one affirmation with each breath).
- They need to be said in the present as the brain takes everything literally
- Your brain will try and fight this as it still believes the old thoughts but repetition will dissolve these old beliefs. The more you affirm the quicker the change.

Activity:

Loop affirmations are really effective for reprogramming our minds to start to think more positively.

Loop affirmations are repeating the same mantra over and over. It takes saying something 10,000 for it to become ingrained.

During the day just keep repeating over and over again I am safe, I am loved.

Bonus activity:

Repeat quietly for 5-10 minutes in the mirror 'May I be safe, may I be calm, may I be happy.'

Why it works:

Loving-kindness practice increases self-compassion and calm. Our feelings are created by the thoughts we think not what is actually happening to us. The more we can tell our selves more positive thoughts the better we feel.



Day 9: Havening Technique

Havening is a gentle technique that helps reduce stress, anxiety, and overwhelming emotions. It uses soothing touch (stroking your arms, hands, or face) to calm the brain and create a sense of safety.

Why it works:

Gentle, repetitive touch activates delta brain waves, which are associated with relaxation and safety. This calms the amygdala (the brain's fear and threat center) and helps reduce the emotional intensity linked to stressful or traumatic memories.

Over time, the brain can recode the memory, so that it no longer triggers the same emotional or physical response.



How to try it at home:

- 1) Gently stroke down your arms, face, or hands in a slow, comforting way
- 2) While doing this, breathe slowly and think of something positive, or simply count/hum to yourself
- 3) Repeat for a few minutes until you feel calmer

It's like giving your mind and body a "reset button" when life feels overwhelming.

Activity: self-hug

Wrap your arms around yourself and hold a hug for 1 minute.

Why it works:

Self-touch releases calming hormones and soothes your nervous system.



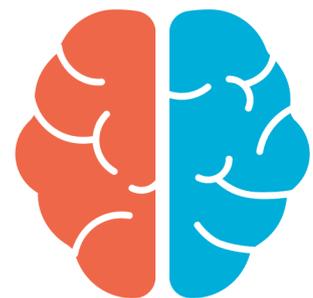
Day 10: Using Bilateral Stimulation

What is bilateral stimulation?

Bilateral stimulation (often called BLS) is a technique that gently activates both sides of the brain in a rhythmic, back-and-forth pattern. It's commonly used in therapies such as EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing) and other calming methods.

How it works

- The brain has two halves (left and right).
- When we stimulate them alternately through movement, sound, or touch, it helps the brain process emotions, reduce stress, and feel more balanced.
- It works a bit like “resetting” the brain so that big feelings or upsetting memories lose their intensity.



Examples of bilateral stimulation

- Eye movements: Following a moving object side to side.
- Tapping: Gently tapping left then right on the knees, arms, or hands.
- Sounds: Listening to alternating tones in each ear.
- Walking: The natural left-right rhythm of walking also provides bilateral stimulation.

Why it helps parents & children

- Calms anxiety and stress.
- Helps regulate emotions during overwhelm.
- Can make it easier to process upsetting experiences.
- Works well as a simple calming exercise at home—for adults and children.

Bilateral tapping – a calming exercise

This is an easy way to calm the mind and body when you or your child feel stressed, anxious, or overwhelmed.

Step 1 – Get comfortable

- Sit somewhere safe and relaxed.
- Take a slow, deep breath in...and out.

Step 2 – Gentle tapping

- Cross your arms over your chest (like giving yourself a hug) or place your hands on your knees.
- Begin tapping slowly, one side at a time: Left tap... Right tap... Left tap... Right tap.
- Keep the rhythm gentle, like a heartbeat.



Step 3 – Focus

While tapping, you can:

- Think of a safe or happy memory.
- Repeat calming words (e.g., "I am safe, I am calm").
- Or simply notice your breathing.

Step 4 – Continue for a few minutes

- Keep tapping until you notice your body feels more relaxed.
- Finish with one more deep breath in...and out.

Day 11: Journaling Calm

Journaling is a simple way to manage anxiety by:

- Releasing worries – writing them down clears your mind.
- Noticing patterns – helps you understand what triggers your anxiety.
- Gaining perspective – thoughts often feel smaller on paper.
- Problem-solving – separates what you can and can't control.
- Boosting positivity – gratitude or calming reflections shift focus away from worry.
- Tracking progress – shows how far you've come.

Quick ideas for parents:

- Do a “worry dump” before bed. A worry dump is where you write down a page of what you are thinking and feeling.

Remember our thoughts are what create our feelings. This will help you understand where your anxiety might be coming from.

Looking at the story you are telling yourself. Will this help you feel calmer or more anxious?



To help:

- Write 3 things you're grateful for.
- Reframe anxious thoughts with calmer, kinder ones.
- Write 3 things that helped you feel calm today.

Why it works:

Reflecting on calm moments increases your awareness and ability to find peace. Journaling is really effective in acknowledging how we feel and releasing it.



Day 12: Connecting with Your Inner Child

Your inner child is the part of you that still holds childlike feelings, needs, and memories. When we feel anxious or stressed, it's often this younger part of us that feels unsafe or overwhelmed.

Stress can come from old wounds and traumas that our body holds. By connecting to your inner child with kindness, you can bring comfort, reassurance, and calm.

Why it works:

Soothes the Nervous System

When we feel anxious, our nervous system can act like a child feeling unsafe.

Showing kindness to your inner child signals safety to your brain, helping it shift from "fight or flight" to a calm state.



Inner child calming exercise

Step 1 – Get comfortable

Sit somewhere quiet. Place your hand gently on your heart or give yourself a light self-hug. Take a slow breath in...and out.

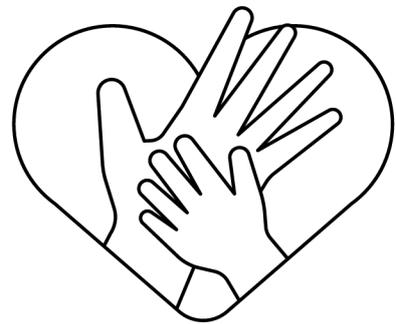
Step 2 – Imagine your younger self

Close your eyes and picture yourself as a child. Notice how old you are, what you're wearing, and how you're feeling

Step 3 – Offer comfort

In your mind, kneel down to this younger version of you. Smile warmly and say:

- "I see you."
- "You are safe now."
- "I'm here for you."



Step 4 – Gentle reassurance

Imagine wrapping your younger self in a safe, warm hug.

Let them know:

- "You are loved."
- "You don't have to be afraid."
- "I will take care of you."

Step 5 – Return to the present

Take a slow breath. Feel the safety and warmth inside you. Gently open your eyes, carrying that sense of calm and comfort into your day.

Bonus activity:

When you are stressed today close your eyes and put your hand on your heart and imagine it's the younger version of you who is feeling that anxiety.

Ask them what they need and then give yourself that. Give them a hug and tell them they are safe. Teach your children the same.

Bonus activity:

Do something your inner child would love Draw, Dance, Laugh at something funny.

Why it works:

Laughter lowers cortisol levels!



Day 13: Warm Bath or Shower

Why water helps calm anxiety

1) Activates the relaxation response

- Being near or in water (like a bath, shower, or stream) can trigger your parasympathetic nervous system, which lowers heart rate and blood pressure.
- This is your body's natural "rest and digest" mode, making you feel calmer.

2) Provides sensory soothing

- The sound, movement, and feel of water are soothing sensory inputs.
- Gentle splashing, waves, or flowing water can reduce tension and help the mind focus on the present moment.

3) Encourages mindfulness

- Drinking water slowly, noticing its temperature and taste, or feeling it on your skin brings attention to the here-and-now.
- Mindfulness reduces overthinking and breaks cycles of worry.

4) Regulates breathing

- Sipping water or doing slow breathing while in a bath or shower encourages deeper, calmer breaths, which lowers stress hormones.

5) Provides a Comforting Ritual

- Routine water-based activities—morning shower, evening bath, tea time—can create a predictable, safe space, helping the brain feel secure.

Why it works:

Warm water relaxes muscles and calms the nervous system



Day 14: Vagal Nerve Stimulation with Gentle Humming or Chanting

What it is:

The vagus nerve connects the brain to many organs and is key in regulating stress and calm. Gentle humming, chanting, or singing activates the vagus nerve, promoting relaxation.

How it works:

Vibrations from humming or chanting signal the nervous system to slow heart rate, reduce tension, and improve emotional regulation.

Why it helps:

It's a quick, effective way to reduce anxiety and increase feelings of safety.

How parents can try it:

- Hum a tune for 1–2 minutes while focusing on your breath.
- Try simple chants like “mmm” or “om” with each exhale.
- Encourage children to hum along—it's playful and calming!

Challenge Reflection

Well done! You did it!

Congratulations on completing your Calm & Grounding journey!

Taking this time for yourself is a huge achievement.

Keep going:

Repeat these exercises over the next 2 weeks to strengthen your calm and make these habits part of your daily life.



Consistency is key—small steps every day lead to big changes.

Mini reflection:

- Which exercise helped you the most?
- How do you feel after completing 2 weeks?
- One thing you want to continue every day

Remember:

Every moment you take for yourself helps you feel calmer, more confident, and more in control. Keep showing up—you've got this!

