**10 easy ways to calm yourself or your children down**

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**These easy calming methods have been taken from Lauren Brukner's book, The Kids' Guide to Staying Awesome and in Control. Brukner is an occupational therapist who helps kids who have sensory integration issues be able to keep it together in school. However, her calming techniques are brilliant for any kids and adults too.**

 **1. Hand Massage**

What's great about this is it can be done at any time. No one will notice. Simply use the thumb of one hand and press around the palm of the other hand. It's very soothing.

 **2. Palm Push**

By pushing your palms together and holding for five to ten seconds, you give your body "proprioceptive input," according to Brukner, which "lets your body know where it is in space."

 **3. Close Your Eyes**

It is said that 80 percent of sensory stimulation comes in through the eyes, so shutting them every now and then gives your brain a much-needed break.  Highly sensitive people can benefit from staying in bed with their eyes closed. They don't have to be sleeping. Having the eyes closed allows for some chill time and a break from being bombarded with stimulation.

**4. Mindful Sighing**

To do this you breathe in to a count of five through your mouth and then you let out a very loud sigh.

**5. Mindful Monkey Stretch**

Bring your hands, arms extended, in front of you, then bring the arms down. Next bring your arms (still extended) to your sides and then down. Next bring your arms all the way past your head and then swoop down allowing your head to dangle between your knees and hung there for a second. This exercise is extremely effective at releasing the tension we hold in different parts of our body.

**6. Hug Yourself**

Did you know that a ten-second hug a day can change biochemical and physiological forces in your body that can lower risk of heart disease, combat stress, fight fatigue, boost your immune system, and ease depression? You can begin by giving yourself a hug. By squeezing your belly and back at the same time, you are again giving yourself proprioceptive input (letting your body know where you are in space), which can help stabilize you.

**7. Wall Push**

Another great exercise to ground kids (and adults) with sensory integration issues, according to Brukner, is the wall push, where you simply push against the wall with flat palms and feet planted on the floor for five to ten seconds. Placing the weight of our body against a solid, immobile surface and feeling the pull of gravity is stabilizing, even on a subconscious level.

**8. Superman Pose**

If you do yoga, the superman pose is basically the airplane position, except the arms and the hands are stretched out in front of you, not to the sides. Lie on your tummy on the floor. Extend your arms in front of you, and hold them straight out. Extend your legs behind you and hold them straight out. Hold that pose for ten seconds. It's a great exercise if your child is sleepy, overexcited, distracted, or antsy.

**9. Shake**

Did you know that animals relieve their stress by shaking? Lots of animals shake off their fear after being frozen in panic to escape a predator. So give it a go, get your children to get their shake on!

**10. Bubble Breath**

The Bubble Breath is very simple and calming.
Breathe in for five seconds, out for five seconds.
Imagine you have a wand of bubbles. When you breathe out, be careful not to pop it.
Place one flat palm on your heart, one flat palm on your belly.
Breathe in through your nose and hold your breath for five seconds.
Breathe out a large "bubble" though pursed lips, blow out for five seconds.