

MAGICAL COPING SKILLS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

COPING SKILLS FOR OUR BODIES: ELEMENT OF EARTH TECHNIQUES

Breathe! Seriously, breathe like a baby breathes. Take 3 deep stomach breaths. Inhale deeply and expand that beautiful belly. Be not ashamed of thy belly! And then exhale deeply. Inhale power and exhale everything that doesn't serve you.

"We are made from star stuff," as Carl Sagan said. How divine we are then! **Eat well, sleep well, and treat your body in ways that honor its majestic origins.**

Create a physical space that allows you to feel grounded and centered. The Danish word "hygge" describes a cozy, contented mood that comes from savoring the simple comforts of life. Set up a little nest somewhere in your home so you can experience all the grounding benefits of that comfy, hygge mindset.

Somatic breathing and movement. Essentially when we practice somatic exercises, we are intentional with our breathwork and fully aware of our bodily sensations.

Exercise, do some yoga, or take a walk around the block. Anything that gets your heart rate up and your blood pumping allows those feel-good brain chemicals (endorphins, dopamine, serotonin, etc.) to be released. Those feel-good brain chemicals help us to regulate our moods, reduce our stress, and increase our focus. And a witch with a focused mind is a powerful witch indeed.

Take a magical bath with crystals, candles, herbs, and lots of bubbles. No bathtub? No problem. Hang herbs in the shower, use shower steamers, and visualize the water washing any stress down the drain.

HEALING CRYSTALS & HERBS THAT CORRESPOND WITH EARTH:

Crystal Suggestions: Black Tourmaline, Moss Agate
Herbal Suggestions: Echinacea, Patchouli, Verbena

MAGICAL COPING SKILLS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

COPING SKILLS FOR OUR MINDS: ELEMENT OF AIR TECHNIQUES

Prioritize and simplify your To-Do List to reduce holiday stress. Think about what really matters to YOU during the holidays. Make a list of your priorities then number it in order of importance. Look at the bottom of the list and see if you can reduce, limit, or even eliminate those items completely.

Put that perfectionism in check and adjust your expectations. As a wise friend often reminds me, "Is it perfect? No. Is it perfect enough? Yeah!" Perfect enough is good enough.

Limit any media or social media that is getting you into a negative headspace. Make a conscious effort to consume media that only lifts your mindset, at least until the holidays pass.

Practice mindfulness when you notice your mind getting stuck in the past or going too far into the future. When our minds are in the future, we can experience fear and anxiety. When our minds are into the past, we can experience regret or shame. The present moment is at least somewhat tolerable. And even if it isn't, at least we aren't lumping the pain of the past and the fears of the future on top of the pain of the present. Here are two quick mindfulness techniques that can help us stay in the present:

- *The 3-3-3 Rule of Senses Observation:* Name 3 things you see in your surroundings. Identify three sounds you can hear. Move three parts of your body like your feet, fingers, and shoulders.

- *Describe What You Are Doing Right Now:* Literally, just describe what you are doing right now. Say, for example, you're cleaning your house and find yourself ruminating on the past or worrying about the future. Notice that your mind is not in the present and then say aloud, "I'm stopping that now and being fully present." From there, describe in detail exactly what you are doing at that precise moment: "I am now opening the dishwasher. Now I am putting a plate into the dishwasher . . ." and so on. It may feel silly or odd at first, but the more we do this practice the more we are able to naturally stay in the present.

Meditate or do a visualization. There are tons of fabulous guided meditations on YouTube, Calm, and Insight Timer.

Use affirmations and mantras. One that is fantastic for the Yule season and beyond is, "I release what no longer serves me and absorb what strengthens me."

HEALING CRYSTALS & HERBS THAT CORRESPOND WITH AIR:

Crystal Suggestions:

Aventurine, Pumice

Herbal Suggestions: Dandelion, Eyebright, Rosemary

MAGICAL COPING SKILLS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

COPING SKILLS FOR OUR EMOTIONS: ELEMENT OF WATER TECHNIQUES

Know who is in your **support system**, keep adding to it as you learn who you can trust, and actually utilize the support when you need it.

Remind yourself that **anxiety and depression are unreliable narrators**. They are liars that tell us we would be burdening others by expressing our feelings. They tell us that our stories don't matter and that nobody cares. Don't listen!

How do you feel when someone entrusts you with their story, when they use your shoulder to cry on? Often, it feels like an honor and privilege for us to be there for others. There is nothing wrong with us bestowing that same honor onto others from time to time. But also . . .

BOUNDARIES! Yes, it is indeed an honor to be there for others, but we're also not an emotional garbage disposal for others. It is one thing to be a shoulder for a loved one to cry on, it is another to be a victim of a constant energy vampire who is never without a crisis. Ensure you have people in your corner that give as much as they take and set boundaries with those who don't.

Journal! Journaling has been shown time and time again to be highly effective for making sense of our emotions, particularly when we are experiencing conflicting emotions. If you have a ton of time to journal, consider making a ritual out of it. If the opposite is true, then bullet point journaling is a great quick and dirty option.

If you are working at a job that offers benefits, check to see if you have an **Employee Assistance Program (EAP)** that offers free counseling services. Typically, an EAP offers 3-5 free counseling sessions. While that may not be enough to process and resolve *everything*, it could be enough to help you set a good foundation for some beneficial stress management and/or emotional regulation skills.

HEALING CRYSTALS & HERBS THAT CORRESPOND WITH WATER

Crystal Suggestions: Amethyst,
Azurite

Herbal Suggestions: Chamomile,
Hibiscus, Jasmine

MAGICAL COPING SKILLS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

COPING SKILLS FOR OUR SPIRITS: ELEMENT OF FIRE TECHNIQUES

Perform a ritual. Any ritual. Research has shown that entering ritual space allows the brain a minute to pause and opens us to solutions we would not have otherwise considered. Don't know what ritual to perform? Check out The Sober Witch Podcast or The Sober Witch Blog for some ideas!

Just light a candle. Really! In just doing this small act, you are setting ritual space. You may still be cleaning or attending to other tasks, but you are still creating an atmosphere conducive to spirit. Just be mindful of the candle and don't leave it unattended.

For those who want to light more than just a candle, **try some Fire Scrying.** There is nothing better than sitting in front of a fire on a cold winter night with a warm cup of tea. Prior to beginning your fire scrying session, consider asking a question of your higher self, seeking guidance from spirit/ancestors, or just set an intention. Allow your gaze to soften on the flames of the fire and allow your mind to open to any messages. This simple, but incredibly effective practice warms both the body and spirit.

Get into the flow of creativity. Make something, do a craft, write, pull some tarot cards or runes. Think about those activities that are so engaging you easily lose track of time when doing them.

Connect with nature in whatever way you can, whether that's going for a hike or watching a documentary series like Cosmos or a nature program (especially ones narrated by the great David Attenborough because he is ah-mazing!) While this Coping Skill for the Spirit may seem more like an Earth Technique, it is included here in the Fire Techniques for good reason. There is something deep, primal, and divine that awakens within us when indulging in the aesthetics of our natural surroundings. When the divinity within us connects to the divinity of nature, it ignites a flame in our spirit which can stay lit even through the darkest times.

HEALING CRYSTALS & HERBS THAT CORRESPOND WITH FIRE:

Crystal Suggestions:

Bloodstone, Carnelian

Herbal Suggestions: Cinnamon,
Ginger, Ginseng, Pine