

PRACTICE TIPS

Developing a new habit requires getting out of old ruts which may be very deep, and establishing a new track which can eventually be followed automatically

General tips to practice regularly and create a new routine

To practice regularly you'll need to develop new habits, establishing new behaviours that you repeat automatically. Here are some general tips and suggestions to help you develop a new routine:

- Anchor your practice to an existing routine. Behaviour tends to stick much more easily this way. For instance, decide on a time at which you'll practice (first thing in the morning, after brushing your teeth or after your shower, etc...). Try to find a place that is relatively quiet and where you won't be disturbed. This helps in the beginning.
- Involve a friend or peer. Share your intentions and agree to check-in regularly on progress. By holding yourself accountable you're more likely to stick with your initial intention and goal.
- Deliberately identify cues and rewards ahead of time. Use a daily trigger to start your practice.
- Make a manageable plan for the week. Split long protocols into manageable chunks and spread them over several days.
- Make sure you do the most important things earlier in the day. Self-regulation can feel like a muscle—after exercise it gets tired and doesn't work as well.
- Record your practice regularly and note what was positive about it. A sense of accomplishment can trigger our reward circuits to reinforce a habit. Try a habit tracking App.

Specific tips for sophrology practice.

If you wonder what exercises you should practice in a session remember that sophrology is a structured method. Follow the 5 steps (sophronisation, activation, pause, desophronisation, phenodescription).

A sophronisation is what gets you into the sophro-liminal level. Although the most common sophronisation in sophrology is the body scan, you may find that it's easier for you to do a body scan and to get into sophro-liminal level if you do a breathing exercise first or a dynamic exercise. It's about experimenting and getting to know yourself and what gets you into that level. As you become more used to getting into sophro-liminal level you'll spend shorter time on the body scan.

At first, you may find it easier to use recordings but there are great benefits to self-guiding and learning to practice on your own. Not only will it help you practice sophrology anywhere and anytime you need it, it will also help you to reconnect with yourself and listen to what you need on the day. For instance, you may notice a particular part of the body needs a bit more attention and a bit longer on the body scan, or a particular exercise may come to you. Try to do 10-min practices without recordings, just using your body, your awareness, your attention, your breath, your imagination. Remember there is no right or wrong, just a structured approach, 5 steps. Experiment, be curious about what happens, record it.

Once or twice a week, use a recording of a longer exercise.

Here are some ideas to start your own practice:

- Take a full DR protocol and split it into chunks and do it over a week or two. You can work with only one system in each practice, and even choose only one activation for the system/s you're working in. Always do a sophronisation to start with at least a BVS. Consider using the Journal pages on the toolbox to plan ahead and make it easy on the day.
- Use Sophrology cards or your own list of exercises and select one or two based on what you feel you need that day.
- You can always fall back on the 3 key techniques: BVS+SND+SVA or a simple positive Synchronised Breathing (SSB).

Finally, the most important is to practice even when you have little time.

- When you can't do 10 minutes, just do 2 minutes
- When you can't do 2 minutes, use every opportunity of waiting or moving in the day to do a simple dynamic or breathing exercise, or even simply tuning into how your body feels.

Some examples of 10-minute practices from the Sophrology Academy Vimeo channel:

[Sunshine breathing](#)

[Shoulder Pumping, BS, neck](#)

[SND + SSB](#)

[Neutral object](#)

[Vital activation](#)

[Positive Presence \(BS, SND+ISP\)](#)