

Somatic Tendencies of Each Enneagram Type

One

Stress response shows up as resistance/frustration
Stress is contained in the muscles
Need to exercise and practice physical relaxation
Allow simple sensory pleasures and enjoyment of breathing/meditation

Narrative Enneagram: As body-based types, Ones often have abundant physical energy, but they exercise intense self-control over their feelings and impulses. This can lead to physical rigidity and tension, particularly in the jaw, neck, shoulders, diaphragm and pelvic floor. Ones have a good sense of “knowing” in their belly centers, but may not be consciously aware of this resource. Because they often hold tension in the diaphragm, their breathing may be impeded.

If you are a One...

Your task is to practice physical relaxation, allowing yourself to feel pleasure while breathing. This may bring up anxiety, “unacceptable” feelings or impulses. The key is to relax and inhale slowly and steadily, gently stretching the diaphragm and rib cage. Then let go as you exhale, without pushing or holding back. If you experience anxiety, try to spread the energy and sensation around the body. Or switch to slow breathing in the belly.

Two

Disconnected from own sensations/needs
Ungrounded - focus is outward
Task - meditations that focus inward on physical sensations and feelings

Narrative Enneagram: As feeling types, Twos are full of energy and expressive in their upper bodies, but find it hard to stay grounded or sense their lower bodies. They tend to discharge anxiety or uncontained emotional energy through talking. Empathic and attuned to others, they may restrict their breathing while waiting for other people’s responses.

If you are a Two...

Your task is to attend to the interior landscape of personal needs, feelings and sensations. This might seem selfish, but it will help you set boundaries and separate your needs and feelings from those of others. Follow the physical sensation of your breath. Take slow, full breaths down into the belly and send your energy down into your legs and feet. If you feel overwhelmed, bring your attention out and notice your physical environment or get up and move around a bit.

Three

Prone to burnout

Pushing the body to get things done or accomplish goals

Tend to ignore feelings

Task - to slow down and tune in

Narrative Enneagram: As feeling types, Threes hold a lot of energy or tension in the heart area, but rather than feel their own feelings, they prefer to channel everything into action, productivity and results. With their high charge, it's hard for them to sit still. Emotional pressure builds up but the lid stays on – they are the original Type As. Threes have a strong life force, but often do not know how to access this without a moving-forward energy. They tend to hold energy or tension in the chest, and don't usually slow down enough to experience the natural rhythms of their body.

If you are a Three...

Your task is to slow down and practice focusing your attention on what's happening inside. This may seem like a waste of time, but it will open up space to know your own feelings and develop a relationship with your inner self. Follow the sensation of your breath, and focus on breathing deeply into your belly rather than your chest. It's important to soften your assertive stance and spread the energy around your body. Relax as much as possible as you exhale, allowing yourself to let go.

Four

Emotional overload - learn to feel and let go

Use body as way to mobilize and release feelings

Task is to drop analysis and tune into the body - focus on action

Narrative Enneagram: As feeling types, Fours have an intense emotional life, which can lead to big ups and downs. They alternate between striving to win recognition from others and going deeply into their interior worlds. As romantic idealists, they seek a personal and meaningful connection to their work and others. But when things do not measure up, they easily become disappointed and tend to withdraw. On the other hand, when they are excited, anxious or full of feelings, they tend to "spill out" into their environment.

If you are a Four...

Your task is to establish balance with your emotions and your relationships, and to notice when you are amplifying your emotion with provocative or dramatic narratives. A focus on calm, steady breathing and listening to your body will help connect you to the vitality of your

instincts. Expressive activities – dancing, singing, art, etc. – channel emotional energy while helping you stay grounded in your body.

Five

Disconnected from body - in the head

Nervous system gets overloaded

Task is to connect with the body and nature

Tune into feelings without analysis

Regular recharge time so you don't feel like you have to hoard it

Narrative Enneagram: As thinking types, Fives seek to develop knowledge and expertise while protecting their privacy and autonomy. They tend to stay in their heads and avoid experiencing body sensations or feelings. Sensitive to sound, touch and intrusion, Fives hold tension mostly in the gut (instead of musculature).

If you are a Five...

Your task is to connect with your body and emotions. While we all unconsciously hold our breath to avoid scary or overwhelming feelings and sensations, as a chronic defensive strategy, it constricts your vitality and keeps you in your head. This may seem safe, but being in your body offers a new kind of security. Focus on slowly expanding your diaphragm and deepening your breath. You may feel uncomfortable or even anxious at first. But take it one breath at a time, learning to tolerate increased sensation. With continued practice you will access the abundant energy of your instincts, increase your capacity for pleasure and sensation, and make better contact with other people and the physical environment.

Six

Hyper-vigilant Nervous system

Mindfulness practices - I am safe now

Body based practices to get out of head - body scan

Task is to regulate NS

Narrative Enneagram: As mental types, Sixes use their keen perception to anticipate problems, find solutions, and establish rules and procedures that create safety and security. Some Sixes are cautious while others jump into action. But all Sixes have a very sensitive neurological alarm system that puts them on high alert when there are signals of danger, even when the danger is imagined or magnified. Cautious or phobic Sixes tend to withdraw, either by physically leaving situations or going into their heads. Counter-phobic Sixes tend to accumulate more muscular tension and rigidity. The diaphragm and throat are control centers, which can result in a halting or stuttering style of breathing and speaking.

If you are a Six...

Your task is to develop a sense of safety within yourself. Start by becoming centered and grounded in your body. Take slow, deep breaths and stretch the actual muscle of your diaphragm, then release the exhalation as much as possible. It's important to notice when your alarm system is activated for the fight, flight or freeze response. To help restore calm and reduce anxiety, breathe slowly and deeply into your belly, allowing pleasurable sensations to build. If you need more energy to deal with challenges, practice breathing into your chest. And when you find yourself worrying and holding your breath, return to the practice of slow, steady breathing.

Seven

Can use the body to meet needs for freedom and variety
Tune in to how body is actually doing and rest when needed
Develop body knowing - gut knowing by shifting attention inward when in social situations

Narrative Enneagram: As mental types, Sevens' energy and attention tend to go up into the head and out into the world. Physically loose and flexible, their body armor is less about muscular tension and more about patterns of avoidance as seen in the upper chest and shoulders. Sevens retreat from sad or painful feelings into their minds; their challenge is to stay grounded in their bodies.

If you are a Seven...

Your task is to balance your tendency to move up into the head with turning inward and down into your body and feelings. Breathe into your belly, notice physical sensations in your lower body, and feel your feet on the ground. When you notice you have left your body for the pleasures (or worries) of the mind, practice dropping back down to your belly and feet. Although this may not feel like fun at first, it will become more pleasant over time as you open up a whole new realm of experience, focus priorities, feel your feelings, and develop your capacity for emotional intelligence.

Eight

Have a lot of physical energy
Somatic Task -to be mindful of others and how you use your energy
Release stress and anger in a healthy way
Soften defenses against feelings and heart center
Risk of burnout due to need to do - especially if combined with the 2.

Narrative enneagram

As assertive body-based types with good access to their instinctual energy, Eights toughen up to avoid vulnerability, which results in chronic patterns of physical tension. With excessive energy and enthusiasm, they tend to over-exert and over-consume.

Your task is to soften into your feelings and open your heart center. Focus on managing your breath as appropriate to the situation at hand. Avoid powering up with chest breathing as an automatic response. Instead, practice breathing into your belly to calm down and relax. (For example, take 10 slow breaths when you find yourself getting angry). Before you react to a situation, follow your breath and tune into what you are feeling and sensing inside. This pause will help you be less excessive and more flexible.

Nine

Tend to withdraw into self/fantasy or distraction

Disconnected from life force energy

Task - stay present to your physical energy, focus on action on behalf of your true priorities

From Narrative Enneagram: Paradoxically, as body-based types, Nines can be out of touch with their bodies. The intuition and common sense of the gut is operating, but they aren't necessarily paying attention. While they can hold tension in their bodies, they prefer to stay comfortably undercharged and commonly lack muscle tone. Low-energy Nines suffer from inertia and physical laziness, while high-energy Nines stay constantly active.

If you are a Nine...

Your task is to get out of your comfort zone and take action on behalf of your true priorities. Try being more assertive with people or taking on difficult activities or projects. This may bring up distress and anxiety at first, but will get easier with practice. Use conscious breathing to tune into your body, feelings and intuition. You can increase your physical energy and vitality by breathing into your chest. Resist the tendency to lower your energy level by belly breathing or by dispersing your energy through comfortable but non-essential tasks, over-talking, or over-consuming food, TV, etc.