

Externalizing Mental Load + Rest and Restoration

Hello and welcome to ArtPause. My name is Quinn Rivenburgh and I'm an art therapist and yoga teacher. I will now invite you into a brief mindfulness and drawing practice. As you begin, please remember that we will be focusing on the process--your lived experience in the moment--rather than the product of what you create. And as we enter this time together, please always take care of your body and its needs, and know that you can pause or leave whenever you need to. This recording does not replace mental health treatment.

Today we are going to begin with artmaking and then move into our meditation practice. Sometimes, when our brains are busy, they can get in the way of attending to presence. This drawing exercise helps externalize what's on our mind, temporarily setting it aside by marking it down onto the paper.

To begin, on a sheet of paper, draw a large jar or box. Then, imagine that all your responsibilities, your fears, your concerns are rocks which you are placing into the jar. Bigger rocks means they take up more of your brainspace. Fill the jar with your rocks, starting with the biggest ones first, then adding those little nagging pebbles. Label the rocks as you go.

When you're done, notice how full the jar is. No wonder you're tired! Those rocks were heavy. Now is the time to set the jar aside. It will be there when you return.

Please take a moment to deliberately set the jar farther away from you if possible--on a shelf in the corner, in another room--or at least just turn the paper over or cover it up.

Now, with your worries literally set aside, we can enter a period of rest. If possible, I invite you to lie down; find a posture that is supportive, perhaps with a pillow under your knees.

Now, bring your attention to your breath. Inhale deeply, exhale completely. Again, inhale deeply, exhale completely.

We will now move into a rotation of awareness throughout our body. As I name each body part, rest your attention on that body part as much as possible. Let's begin with the right hand thumb, right index finger, middle finger, ring finger, pinky finger. The palm of the right hand, the back of the right hand, the right wrist, forearm, elbow, upper arm, shoulder, the right chest wall; the heart center, left chest wall, left shoulder, left upper arm, left elbow, left forearm, wrist, the back of the left hand, the palm of the left hand, pinky finger, ring finger, middle finger, index finger, the left thumb. Now bring your attention to the crown of your head, your forehead; right eyebrow, left eyebrow, the space between the eyebrows, the right eye, the left eye, the right eyelid, the left eyelid; the right nostril, the left nostril; the right cheek, the left cheek; the right ear, the left ear; the lips, teeth, the tip of the tongue, the middle of the tongue, the back of the tongue; the

jaw, the throat, and the Heart Center. Rest your awareness in the Heart Center, placing your hands over your heart if that feels supportive to you.

Inhale deeply, exhale completely. Continue for a few more breaths, with your awareness on your heart. Rest here as long as you'd like. When you feel ready, slowly begin to wiggle your fingers and toes, stretching your body long, and then press yourself up to a seated position as slowly and mindfully as you can.

Thank you for taking an Art Pause.