

Supportive Touch

Using supportive touch is a wonderful way to care for yourself. I think many of us realised the importance of touch during lockdown - the absence of touch was felt by all. Touch activates the care system and the parasympathetic nervous system to help us calm down and feel safe.

Give this a try today and anytime you are feeling overwhelmed or anxious. It may seem awkward or embarrassing at first, so try this when you are alone. You might like to try putting your hand on your body during difficult periods several times a day for a period of at least a week.

Hand-on-Heart

When you notice you're under stress, take 2-3 deep, satisfying breaths.

Gently place your hand over your heart, feeling the gentle pressure and warmth of your hand. If you wish, place both hands on your chest, noticing the difference between one and two hands.

Feel the touch of your hand on your chest. If you wish, you could make small circles with your hand on your chest.

Feel the natural rising and falling of your chest as you breathe in and as you breathe out.

Linger with the feeling for as long as you like.

Some people feel uneasy putting a hand over the heart. Feel free to explore where on your body a gentle touch is actually soothing. Some other possibilities are:

- One hand on your cheek
- Cradling your face in your hands
- Gently stroking your arms
- Crossing your arms and giving a gentle squeeze
- Gently rubbing your chest, or using circular movements
- Hand on your abdomen
- One hand on your abdomen and one over heart
- Cupping one hand in the other in your lap
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Hopefully you'll start to develop the habit of physically comforting yourself when needed, taking full advantage of this surprisingly simple and straightforward way to be kind to ourselves.

Credit: [Self-compassion.org](https://www.self-compassion.org)

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