

SIMPLE NEUROSCIENCE SERIES:
THE NEUROSCIENCE OF STRESS

Use neuroscience to create simple but strong
stress-beating habits

YOUR WORKBOOK



MIND TRAINING

Because Your Mind Matters

[TO-DO] OUR TOOLBOX: SCARF MODEL



Personal practice: take the SCARF assessment

Find what are your most sensible SCARF buttons.



<https://neuroleadership.com/research/tools/nli-scarf-assessment/>

Recommended time: 5 minutes

The screenshot shows the NeuroLeadership Institute website. At the top, there is a navigation menu with links for Solutions for Organizations, Programs for Individuals, Adapt Faster: The NeuroLeadership Summit, NeuroLeadership Media, Events, Research & Impact, and About Us. Below the navigation is a language selection dropdown set to 'Select Language' and a 'Powered by Google Translate' notice. The main content area features a video player titled 'The SCARF® Assessment' with a play button. To the right of the video is a form for the assessment. The form includes fields for First Name, Last Name, Email, Job Title, Company, and Country (set to Afghanistan). There is a checkbox for consent to the Privacy Policy and a 'BEGIN ASSESSMENT' button.

Fill out the form below to begin the assessment. This is for individual use. If you wish to use with your team or organization, [contact us](#).

Note: If you have trouble accessing the assessment, please try a different browser, or 'incognito mode'.

First Name *

Last Name *

Email *

Job Title *

Company *

Country *

By checking this box you consent to NLI's [Privacy Policy](#). NLI respects your privacy and only uses your information for legitimate business purposes as explained in our [Privacy Policy](#).

BEGIN ASSESSMENT

The SCARF® Model assesses the differences in people's social motivation. Some people are more sensitive to status threat and rewards, others to certainty and relatedness. Having SCARF needs satisfied drives **engagement** and retention.

Learn more about the SCARF Model® by reading the blog post, [Five Ways to Spark \(or Destroy\) Your Employees' Motivation](#).

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MIND TRAINING
Because Your Mind Matters

[TO-DO] OUR TOOLBOX: SCARF MODEL



Exercise: which SCARF buttons are pushed negatively in each paragraph?

Situation

SCARF button(s) pushed negatively

- The Covid-19 pandemic led to many people having to work from home, even if they liked it or not.
- During a meeting, a colleague makes a negative comment about your work.
- When you share with a colleague that you cannot wait to return to the office, she says that if she'd have a choice, she'd work from home forever.
- You find out that new comers in your company, hired on similar role/level like yours, receive a 20% higher salary.
- At the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, it was unclear whether you'll be able or not to keep your current job.

Responses
on the next
slide

Recommended time: 10 minutes



[TO-DO] OUR TOOLBOX: SCARF MODEL



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Recommended time: 5 minutes



[TO-DO] OUR REACTION TO STRESS



Personal reflection: your last week

During the last few days, what were some stressful situations you experienced?

From what categories of stress were they part of?

Chronic or Acute? Which situation(s)

Physical or Psychological? Which situation(s)

Real or Imagined? Which situation(s)

Recommended time: 30 minutes



[TO-DO]: CONSTRUCTIVE VS. TOXIC STRESS



Personal reflection: your level of stress



How stressed are you? 1 (feeling great).....10 (exploding)
Where are you on the stress curve (green, yellow, orange or red zone)?



What are the main stressors from the last 12 months? Make a list of what you think was the most stressful during the last 12 months, group the stressors in low stress, medium stress, high stress, extremely high stress.

Low stress _____

Medium stress _____

High stress _____

Extremely high stress _____

How did you managed these situations? What helped you?

Recommended time: 30 minutes



[TO-DO]: BUILDING RESILIENCE - BME - BODY



Personal practice: deep breathing

Practice every morning deep breathing for 5 minutes and gradually expand to 15 minutes. You can practice 4-8-8 or 4-8 if retentions are challenging. Observe the impact on your emotional state, your relationships and your focus.

Recommended time: minimum 5 minutes / day



[TO-DO]: BUILDING RESILIENCE - BME - MIND

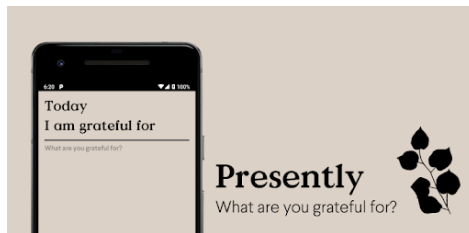


Personal practice: Gratitude

This is the second daily practice I recommend you to include in your life; it will only take 1 minute per day. Reflect every day on what makes you grateful. I recommend you anchor this practice by linking it to a well-established daily routine (e.g. drinking the morning coffee, driving back from work, before starting the daily work, dinner with the family, etc.)

Optional: you can keep a daily journal where you write all gratitude moments (or you can be creative by drawing, creating a gratitude jar, using an app or post on social media).

I have used the mobile app “Presently” for a while now: it’s very simple and you can set a daily reminders, which I am really dependent on. I’m in no way affiliate with the creators of the app. It was the one I found that worked best for me. But there are dozens such apps in the app stores so find one that works for you.



And, by the way, if some of the days you feel like writing multiple times, go with the flow and capture all the things you are thankful for.

Recommended time: 1 minute / day

[TO-DO]: BUILDING RESILIENCE - BME - MIND



Personal practice: Mindful Walk

A mindful walk is an excellent way to connect with nature and present moment, to declutter your mind and to restore your sense of focus. Incorporate mindful walking into your daily life in as little as 5-10 minutes a day by using all of your senses — sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch — to bring awareness to your body and surroundings.

Pay attention to your body, notice how your legs, feet and arms feel with each step you take. Feel the contact of your foot as it touches the ground, and the movement of your body as you move into your next step. Pay attention to your breath and synchronise it with your walk.

If you become lost in thoughts as you continue to walk, use the next step as an opportunity to start over.

Also check the walking meditation from Headspace: <https://www.headspace.com/meditation/walking-meditation>

Here is a guided 15 minutes mindful walk: <https://youtu.be/HRuqe26F8SU>

Recommended time: 15 minutes



[TO-DO]: BUILDING RESILIENCE - BME - ENVIRONMENT



Personal reflection:

How do you perceive your current social support system? Do you have around you people you can trust and share the good and the bad in your life?

If the current state of your social support system is unsatisfying, what can you do to improve it? If it is satisfying, what can you do to strengthen it? Make of that a weekly practice.

Recommended time: 15 minutes + weekly time to connect



[TO DO]: BUILDING RESILIENCE



Personal reflection: what is your go-to strategy for building resilience?

Observe which of the three strategies works best for you to help you regulate your emotions and increase your resilience.

What activities/habits do you already implement from each of the three strategies?

Body:

Mind:

Environment:

Recommended time: 10 minutes



[TO DO]: BODY-MIND-ENVIRONMENT FRAMEWORK



Personal practice: building resilience, day by day

Let's introduce a new daily practice: use the Body-Mind-Environment Resilience Framework and choose one practice (or more) that feels easy to implement.

It can be as simple as:

- Sleeping 8 hours per night, or removing sugar from your diet, or exercising more (Body)
- Starting a mindfulness practice, or cultivating gratitude, or practicing emotion labeling (Mind)
- Offer your full presence and active listening next time you talk with a friend, spend more time in nature (Environment)

I commit to the following practices:

Body:

Mind:

Environment:



[TO DO]: BODY-MIND-ENVIRONMENT FRAMEWORK



Personal practice: 1 day digital detox retreat

Take a break from any digital activity (phone, email, social media, TV, tablet etc.). Probably a weekend day, so you can turn off your phone completely.

Recommended activities for your 1 day detox retreat:

Body:

Sleep 8h+, exercise, eat nourishing food (preferably freshly cooked vegetarian dishes, no sugar, no fried food)

Mind:

Start the day with 1 hour mindfulness practice (journaling, gratitude moment, breathing, meditation, mindful walk or any other mindfulness practice you enjoy doing), read something that nourishes your soul, spend time in nature observing colours, shapes, the touch of the wind, sounds, flavours, taste fresh food and notice the flavours. End the day with a short mindfulness practice (even 5 minutes before sleep can make a big difference - I recommend breathing or meditation).

Relationships:

Spend quality time with friends or family practicing generosity, active listening, kindness, compassion, help someone, cook for others.

Recommended time: 1 day



[BONUS]: EXERCISE FOR CALMING ANXIETY OR PANIC ATTACKS



Personal practice: calming anxiety or panic attacks – the “5-4-3-2-1” technique

This simple exercise can help you ground yourself in moments when you are anxious, panicking or very stressed (and you need to calm the elephant and bring the rider back in command)

The “5-4-3-2-1” technique

Sit quietly. Look around you and notice:

- 5 things you can see
- 4 things you can touch
- 3 things you can hear
- 2 things you can smell
- 1 thing you can taste

E.g., these are mine at this moment

- See: building, window, trees, clouds, grass
- Touch: Monitor, book, coffee cup, notebook
- Hear: birds, cars, cat playing
- Smell: freshly washed clothes, coffee
- Taste: Coffee

