

Somatic Orienting Technique for Chronic Pain Relief

InsightTimer

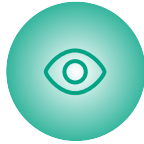
Created in collaboration with Licensed Professional Counselor [Katie Fleming Thomas, MS, LPC](#)



Practice now:

[Mindfulness & Self-Compassion For Chronic Pain](#)

Sometimes being with our pain and going into the body can feel like too much. One tool we can use is **somatic orienting** - using our body's five senses but orienting outward instead of inward. We're looking for things that feel good, pleasant, or neutral, and noticing how they land in our body even while we're hurting.



Visual Orienting

Look for something pleasant - soft light, a favorite color, trees swaying, or even the way shadows fall. Examples: Sunlight through a window, a pet sleeping peacefully, photos that make you smile.

Notice: "Even with this pain, I can see something beautiful. Maybe my eyes soften slightly, or there's a tiny bit of ease in my chest."



Auditory Orienting

Listen for sounds that feel soothing or neutral - birds, gentle music, or even comforting silence. Examples: rain on the roof, a loved one's voice, your favorite calming song, the hum of a fan.

Notice: "Even while hurting, this sound feels okay. Maybe my jaw unclenches a little, or my breathing slows down."



Tactile Orienting

Feel textures or temperatures that are pleasant or comforting. Examples: A soft blanket, cool air on your skin, the warmth of a heating pad on a non-painful area, a pet's fur.

Notice: "Even with this pain, this texture feels nice. Maybe there's a small area of my body that appreciates this touch."



Movement Orienting

Notice any movement that feels good or doesn't increase pain - even tiny ones. Examples: Gentle swaying, wiggling toes, rolling shoulders away from pain, soft stretching.

Notice: "Even while hurting, this small movement feels okay. Maybe there's a bit more flow or less stiffness somewhere."



Smell/Taste Orienting

Find scents or tastes that feel pleasant or comforting. Examples: Essential oils, fresh air, a favorite tea, the smell of something cooking.

Notice: "Even with this pain, this scent feels good. Maybe my breathing deepens slightly, or something opens in my chest."



Why This Helps:

Orienting outward gives your nervous system a break from focusing on pain and reminds your body that not everything is threat or discomfort. It helps regulate your system by finding pockets of pleasure or neutrality, which can soften overall tension and reduce the intensity of your pain experience.