

Painting Exercise to Relieve Stress

This painting exercise, rooted in **Solution-Focused Art Therapy (LOM®)**, offers a gentle way to process stressful situations. By painting a **metaphor**—a neutral, non-situational image—you allow your mind to release tension, explore new perspectives, and quiet the body's stress response.

Through this creative process, your nervous system can settle, helping you feel more calm and centered when facing similar challenges in the future. Sometimes, simply recalling your painting can open up new possibilities for action and remind you of your inner resources.

And if this all sounds a bit theoretical—just try it for yourself. 😊

Before You Start Painting:

1. **Prepare your materials:** Use an A4 or A3 sheet of sturdy paper (120 g/m² or heavier).
2. **Create your space:** Choose a quiet spot where you can feel comfortable and undisturbed. Secure the paper to a table or tape it to a wall or window. You can paint either sitting or standing—whatever feels best for you.
3. **Choose your medium:** Soft pastels, Neocolor crayons, colored pencils, or gouache paints all work beautifully.
4. **Keep a damp cloth nearby** to wipe your fingers between colors.



Describe Your Situation

Start by describing a stressful moment in your everyday life that causes your stress hormones to increase. It can even trigger strong reactions in your body, such as a racing heart, sweaty palms, or stiff muscles.

Ask yourself:

On a scale from 1 to 10, how much does this stress affects me?
(10 being the most stressful.)

1				5					10
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Ask yourself: “If this stress (or the body reaction to it) were a geometric shape, which one from the list below would it be, and what color would it have?”

Choose a shape and a color for your image.



Instruction about the panting process:

1. First, paint the chosen shape very small in the center of the page, and slowly enlarge it until it is about 2 cm from the edge.
2. Paint **very slowly!**
3. Try to **breathe consciously** — inhale and exhale slowly before, during, and after painting.
4. Make sure the color is applied **opaquely**, with **no white areas** showing through.
5. **Refine and adjust** the shape until you are satisfied with it.
6. Then choose a **neutral background color** and paint it slowly around the geometric shape. In the end, the paper should be **completely covered** with your shape and the background color.



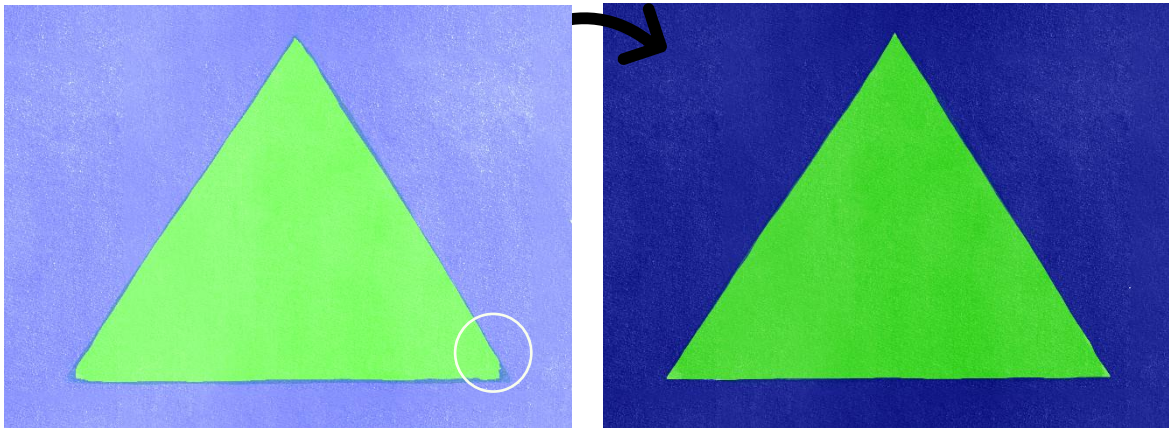
Here you can find a
short example video
to accompany the text.

Start Painting:

Now close your eyes for a moment and take three slow, calm breaths in and out.
Then open your eyes and begin painting slowly, starting from the center.

Small adjustments may help you feel even more at ease in the end.

It could look something like this:



Painted changes: a darker background, sharp corners, and clear lines make the second triangle stand out even more..

Ask Yourself at the End:

How am I feeling right now? _____

How much does my stress affects me **right now, at this moment?**

<i>1</i>				<i>5</i>					<i>10</i>
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