

5-4-3-2-1 Grounding

Coming back to here and now, one sense at a time



When anxiety, panic, a flashback or strong emotion pulls you away, your senses can bring you back. This exercise moves your attention **step by step, from the wide world to one small detail**, and gently anchors you in the present moment. There is no right answer; slow and simple is best.

feeling panicky

overwhelmed

spacey or far away

caught in a memory

before a hard moment

BEFORE I BEGIN

How distressed do I feel right now?

0

calm

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

most distressed

01 Name them, slowly

Say them out loud or silently, then write them down

5

👁️ things I can see

Colours, shapes, light and shadow. Pick small details, like a crack in the paint.

1

2

3

4

5

4

👋 things I can feel

The chair beneath you, your feet on the floor, fabric, air on your skin.

1

2

3

4

3

👂 things I can hear

Near and far sounds: traffic, birds, your own breathing, a clock.

1

2

3

2

👃 things I can smell

Air, soap, coffee, your sleeve. If nothing, name two smells you like.

1

2

1

👅 thing I can taste

What is in your mouth now, or take a sip of water and notice it.

1

02 Afterwards

How distressed do I feel now?

0

calm

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

most distressed

What I noticed, in my body or mind...

03 Making it work for you

Go slowly

Take a breath between each sense. Speed isn't the point.

Get specific

"A blue mug with a chipped handle" grounds more than "a mug".

Adapt freely

If a sense is hard to use, swap it for another or repeat one.

Practise when calm

Skills learned in calm moments are easier to reach in hard ones.

04 My practice log

Bring this to your next session

DAY · TIME	WHERE I WAS, WHAT WAS HAPPENING	BEFORE 0-10	AFTER 0-10	WHAT HELPED MOST