



FREE RESOURCE · ANXIETY AND PANIC · ABOUT 2 MINUTES

The 5-4-3-2-1 grounding technique

When anxiety or panic takes hold, your mind races ahead. This simple exercise uses your senses to bring your attention back to the present moment, wherever you are.

When it can help

- ✓ During a panic attack, or when anxiety is building
- ✓ When you feel overwhelmed, numb or "spaced out"
- ✓ At night, when your mind won't settle
- ✓ Before a difficult conversation or appointment

Step by step

5 Things you can see

Look around slowly and name five things, in your head or out loud. The colour of a cup, a shadow on the wall, a crack in the ceiling.

4 Things you can feel

Your feet on the floor, the weight of your body in the chair, the texture of your sleeve, the air on your skin.

3 Things you can hear

Traffic outside, a clock ticking, your own breathing. Let the sounds come to you.

2 Things you can smell

If nothing stands out, move somewhere you can smell something, or think of two smells you like.

1 Thing you can taste

A sip of water, a mint, or simply the taste in your mouth right now.

Then take a slow breath and notice how you feel. It's fine if the feeling hasn't gone completely. Anxiety usually eases gradually, not all at once.

Helpful tips

- ✓ Go slowly. There are no right or wrong answers.
- ✓ Practise when you're calm, so it's easier to remember when you need it.
- ✓ It works well alongside box breathing.

Need help right now? Call 999 if your life is at risk. For urgent mental health support, call 111 and choose the mental health option, or call Samaritans free on 116 123, any time.

A gentle note. These tools aren't a replacement for counselling or medical care. If something here brings up a lot for you, it's okay to stop. You don't have to work through things on your own. If you'd like to talk to someone, your first counselling session with me is free: 07826 774307 or therapycare.co.uk.