ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION HELP

5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Technique

A simple sensory grounding exercise to bring your attention back to the present when you feel anxious, overwhelmed, or disconnected. Works well during panic, rumination, or dissociation.

GROUNDING FLOW — USE YOUR SENSES 5 SEE 4 TOUCH 3 HEAR 2 SMELL 1 TASTE Breathe slowly throughout · Name each item out loud or in your head End by noticing your feet on the floor and one slow breath

How to Do It

5. **See** — Name **5 things** you can see around you (e.g. a lamp, a book, a colour on the wall).
4. **Touch** — Name **4 things** you can feel (e.g. feet on floor, texture of clothing, chair beneath you).
3. **Hear** — Name **3 sounds** you can hear (e.g. traffic, breathing, a clock).
2. **Smell** — Name **2 scents** you notice (or 2 scents you like if none are present).
1. **Taste** — Name **1 taste** in your mouth (or sip water and notice it).

When to Use This

- When anxiety or panic starts to rise
- When you feel disconnected from the present ("spacing out")
- When thoughts are racing and hard to slow down
- Before sleep if your mind will not settle

Practice Log (optional)

Date	Situation	Anxiety before (1–10)	Anxiety after (1–10)	What helped most?

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Grounding Tips & Breathing Add-On

Combine With Slow Breathing

After the 5-4-3-2-1 exercise, try 4–6 breathing for one minute:

- Breathe in gently through your nose for **4 seconds**
- Breathe out slowly through your mouth for **6 seconds**
- Repeat 6–8 times without forcing or over-breathing

Other Quick Grounding Options

Technique	How to do it
Feet on floor	Press feet firmly down; notice the contact and support.
Hold an object	Hold something cool or textured; describe it in detail.
Name categories	List 5 cities, 5 songs, or 5 animals — any simple category.
TIPP (temperature)	Splash cool water on face or hold ice (briefly) to activate dive reflex.

Remember

Grounding does not remove anxiety instantly every time — it teaches your nervous system that you are safe in the present moment. Practice when calm so it is easier to use when distressed.

Disclaimer: Educational self-help only. Not medical advice. Chest pain or breathing difficulty may need urgent medical assessment — seek emergency care if unsure.

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