

Grounding Practices

Five simple practices for anxious moments.

When anxiety rises, your attention can be pulled towards worries about what might happen. Grounding practices bring your focus back to the present moment through your breath, body and senses. They are simple, quick and can be used almost anywhere.

The five *practices*



Slow *Breathing*

In for four, out for six.



Five Senses *Check*

Five, four, three, two, one.



Feet on the *Floor*

Feel the ground beneath you.



Cool Water on *Hands*

A simple reset for your senses.



Name the *Room*

Notice where you are, right now.

When to use them

- When you feel worried, tense or on edge.
- When your thoughts are racing.
- Before or after a stressful situation.
- When you feel disconnected or overwhelmed.

Getting the most from them

- Practise when you are calm, so they feel familiar.
- Start with one and give it a few minutes.
- Try them all and notice which suit you best.
- Return to them as often as you need.

Choose one that feels right for you. There is no right or wrong way.

This resource is for general reflection and is not a substitute for professional support. Therapy sessions are not for emergencies. For immediate crisis support or urgent medical care, please contact your local emergency services.



PRACTICE 1 OF 5

Slow *Breathing*

In for four, out for six.

Slow breathing is one of the simplest ways to settle your body when anxiety rises. By making your out breath a little longer than your in breath, you send a signal to your body that it is safe to slow down.

Why it *helps*

- A longer out breath supports the body's natural calming response.
- It can help steady a racing heart and shallow, fast breathing.
- Counting gives your mind something simple to focus on.

When to *use* it

- Before a stressful meeting, call or event.
- When your heart is racing or your chest feels tight.
- When you are finding it hard to settle at night.

How to *do* it

- 1 Sit or stand comfortably and rest one hand on your belly.
- 2 Breathe in slowly through your nose for a count of four.
- 3 Breathe out slowly for a count of six, as if gently blowing through a straw.
- 4 Repeat for a few minutes, letting your shoulders and jaw soften.
- 5 Return to your natural breathing and notice how you feel.

Tip If counting to four feels too long, try in for three and out for five. What matters most is that the out breath is longer. If you feel light headed, return to normal breathing.

After trying this, I *notice*...



PRACTICE 2 OF 5

Five Senses *Check*

Five, four, three, two, one.

Anxiety often pulls your attention towards what might happen next. The five senses check brings it back to what is happening right now, by slowly noticing what you can see, hear, touch, smell and taste.

Why it *helps*

- It moves your focus away from worried thoughts and into the present.
- Noticing detail gives a busy mind a calm and simple task.
- It reminds you of where you are and that this moment is manageable.

When to *use* it

- When your thoughts are racing or going round in circles.
- When you feel panic starting to build.
- In busy or noisy places that feel overwhelming.

How to *do* it

- 1 Name **five** things you can **see**. Notice their colour, shape and detail.
- 2 Name **four** things you can **hear**, near or far.
- 3 Name **three** things you can **touch**, such as your clothes, a chair or a table.
- 4 Name **two** things you can **smell**.
- 5 Name **one** thing you can **taste**, or take a slow sip of water.

Tip You can do this silently or say each thing quietly to yourself. If you cannot find a smell or taste, name a smell or taste you enjoy instead.

After trying this, I *notice*...



PRACTICE 3 OF 5

Feet on the *Floor*

Feel the ground beneath you.

When anxiety makes you feel unsteady or far away, bringing your attention to your feet and the ground beneath you can help you feel more present and supported. It is quiet and can be done anywhere.

Why it *helps*

- Physical contact with the ground draws your attention into your body.
- Feeling supported can bring a sense of stability and safety.
- No one around you needs to know you are doing it.

When to *use* it

- During a meeting, conversation or appointment.
- When you feel spaced out, detached or a little unreal.
- While waiting, travelling or standing in a queue.

How to *do* it

- 1 Place both feet flat on the floor, sitting or standing.
- 2 Press your feet gently down and notice the pressure.
- 3 Notice the temperature and texture under your feet.
- 4 Slowly rock from heel to toe, then come back to stillness.
- 5 Notice your chair or the floor holding your weight, and say to yourself: I am here.

Tip At home, try this with bare feet on carpet, tiles or grass. Noticing the different textures can make the practice feel even more grounding.

After trying this, I *notice*...



PRACTICE 4 OF 5

Cool Water on *Hands*

A simple reset for your senses.

A clear physical sensation, such as cool water on your skin, can quickly draw your attention away from anxious thoughts and into the present moment. It gives your body and mind a short pause to reset.

Why it *helps*

- A change in temperature is a strong and simple focus point.
- It can help when you feel hot, flushed or overwhelmed.
- Pausing to wash and dry your hands slows everything down.

When to *use* it

- When you feel heated, tense or unable to think clearly.
- After a difficult conversation or a stressful moment.
- When you need a short break before returning to a task.

How to *do* it

- 1 Turn on the tap and let the water run comfortably cool.
- 2 Hold your hands and wrists under the water for a little while.
- 3 Notice the temperature, the flow and how it feels on your skin.
- 4 Breathe slowly as you do this, letting the out breath be long.
- 5 Dry your hands slowly, noticing the texture of the towel.

Tip No tap nearby? Hold a cool glass or bottle of water in your hands instead. Use comfortably cool water, not icy cold.

After trying this, I *notice*...



PRACTICE 5 OF 5

Name the *Room*

Notice where you are, right now.

Naming what you see around you, in plain and simple words, helps you reconnect with your surroundings. It gently orients your mind to the here and now, rather than to worries or memories.

Why it *helps*

- Describing your surroundings gives your mind a neutral task.
- It helps you feel more connected to where you are.
- It can ease the sense of feeling lost in your thoughts.

When to *use* it

- When you feel disconnected or not quite yourself.
- After waking from a bad dream.
- When worry starts to spiral.

How to *do* it

- 1 Pause and slowly look around the room.
- 2 Name what you see, one thing at a time, quietly or in your head.
- 3 Add detail, such as colour, shape or texture.
- 4 Try a theme, such as everything that is blue or round.
- 5 Finish by naming where you are and what day it is.

Tip For example: a soft grey cushion, a wooden table, a window with morning light. The more detail you notice, the more present you may feel.

After trying this, I *notice*...

THE NEXT STEP

Ready to Go *Deeper*?

The Anxiety Workbook.

These five practices are a helpful place to start. If you would like to understand your anxiety more fully and build a routine that truly fits your life, the Anxiety Workbook takes you further, step by step, at your own pace.

Inside the *workbook*

1 Understanding anxiety

What anxiety is, why your body reacts the way it does, and the thinking patterns that keep it going.

2 Practices for real life

More grounding and calming practices for work, home, night time and busy public places.

3 Your personal toolkit

Map your early warning signs, your triggers and the practices that work best for you.

4 A 14-day practice plan

A simple daily tracker to build the habit and notice what changes over time.

5 Reflection pages

Guided prompts to help you understand your patterns more deeply.

6 Pocket practice cards

Printable cards to keep in your bag, wallet or on your desk.

Prefer more personalised *support*?

Sometimes anxiety can feel difficult to work through alone. Counselling offers a calm, supportive space to explore what's going on, understand your patterns and find ways forward that feel right for you.

Learn more at www.marlynna.com

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