

5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Exercise

You can use your five senses to help manage acute stress and anxiety by focusing your attention on the present moment. This technique helps interrupt a cycle of overthinking by redirecting your focus from anxious thoughts to your immediate environment through sensory input. After completing these five steps, you can continue to maintain your attention on the present moment for as long as you find helpful.

How to use the 5-4-3-2-1 method

- **Identify five things you can see.** Look around your environment and notice five objects or details.
- **Identify four things you can touch.** Focus on the physical sensations you feel, such as the texture of your clothes or the surface of a table.
- **Listen for three things you can hear.** Pay attention to the sounds around you, even small or distant ones.
- **Identify two things you can smell.** Notice two scents in the air, or find a scented object to smell.
- **Identify one thing you can taste.** Focus on the taste in your mouth, or try a piece of gum or candy to savor. You can also recall a recent flavor if there's no immediate taste.