

5-4-3-2-1 Coping Technique for Anxiety

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Anxiety is something most of us have experienced at least once in our life. Public speaking, performance reviews, and new job responsibilities are just some of the work-related situations that can cause even the calmest person to feel a little stressed. This five-step exercise can be very helpful during periods of anxiety or panic by helping to ground you in the present when your mind is bouncing around between various anxious thoughts.

Before starting this exercise, pay attention to your breathing. Slow, deep, long breaths can help you maintain a sense of calm or help you return to a calmer state. Once you find your breath, go through the following steps to help ground yourself:

- 5:** Acknowledge **FIVE** things you see around you. It could be a pen, a spot on the ceiling, anything in your surroundings.
- 4:** Acknowledge **FOUR** things you can touch around you. It could be your hair, a pillow, or the ground under your feet.
- 3:** Acknowledge **THREE** things you hear. This could be any external sound. If you can hear your belly rumbling that counts! Focus on things you can hear outside of your body.
- 2:** Acknowledge **TWO** things you can smell. Maybe you are in your office and smell pencil, or maybe you are in your bedroom and smell a pillow. If you need to take a brief walk to find a scent you could smell soap in your bathroom, or nature outside.
- 1:** Acknowledge **ONE** thing you can taste. What does the inside of your mouth taste like—gum, coffee, or the sandwich from lunch?

<https://www.urmc.rochester.edu/behavioral-health-partners/bhp-blog/april-2018/5-4-3-2-1-coping-technique-for-anxiety.aspx>