

5-4-3-2-1 Grounding

Sometimes, when we feel upset, our thoughts can feel like they are racing or out of control. Practicing the **5-4-3-2-1 grounding** exercise can help you bring your attention back to the present moment, which helps your mind and body relax and feel calmer.

Description:

This exercise uses your 5 senses to shift your focus away from your thoughts, paying attention to what you see, touch, hear, smell, and taste.

How to do 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding

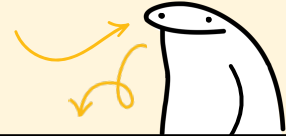
Step 1

Get into a relaxed position, either sitting or lying down.



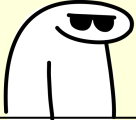
Step 2

Take a few slow, deep breaths in through your nose and out through your mouth.



Step 3

Use your senses to notice:



5 things you can SEE around you

They can be big or small, like a tree outside your window, or your backpack on the floor.



4 things you can FEEL or TOUCH

This could be a water bottle on your desk, or your feet on the floor.



3 things you can HEAR

Listen carefully. Maybe you can hear a fan humming, music playing, or the wind rustling leaves on a tree.



2 things you can SMELL

This could be the smell of soap on your hands, or food cooking nearby. If you can't smell anything, think of two smells you like.



1 thing you can TASTE

Maybe it's your toothpaste, or a snack you just ate. If you can't taste anything, think of a favorite taste.

Step 4

Take a few more slow, deep breaths. Notice how your body and mind feel now.



5-4-3-2-1 Grounding

Note:

There is no right or wrong way to do grounding. Go at your own pace and repeat the exercise if you need to.

Key Tip!

Because it is difficult to learn new things when we are feeling stressed, learn and practice new coping skills when you are feeling calm. Practice several times so you are prepared to use this skill when you need it.



Additional information for caregivers:

Younger Children

Adults can help younger children learn this skill by simplifying the activity to a 3-2-1 exercise that focuses only on what they can see, touch, and hear. Adults can also turn it into a scavenger hunt, letting younger children walk around the room to find things – for example, asking them to find 3 things that are blue, or 2 things that feel soft to touch. Modeling the activity by sharing what you as the adult see, feel, and hear can help younger children understand what to do.

Adults

Coping skills like this one are helpful for adults as well. Practicing 5-4-3-2-1 grounding can help adults calm their own minds and model the activity for their children.

