Grounding Techniques for Anxiety and Panic

Tell yourself you are experiencing anxiety and that this is okay and normal.

**Open your eyes** and put a light on (if it's dark).

**Look** around the room, notice the colours, the people, the shapes of things. Make it more real.

**Listen** to and really notice the sounds around you: the traffic, voices, washing machine, music etc.

**Notice your body**, the boundary of your skin, how your clothes feel on your skin, movement in your hair as you move your head, really feel the chair or floor supporting you - how that feels in your feet, your legs, your body.

**Stand up** and put your feet firmly on the ground

**Move about**: stretch, stamp your feet, jump up and down, dance, run on the spot, rub your arms and legs, clap your hands, walk, remind yourself where you are right now.

Use **5,4,3,2,1**:  Think about 5 things you can see, 4 things you can hear, 3 things you can touch (and touch them), 2 things  you can smell or like the smell of, and 1 slow, deep breath.

Notice what is [**right now**](https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/now.htm).

[**Breathe mindfully**](https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/breathe.htm): breathe deeply down to your belly; put your hand there (just above your navel) and breathe so that your hand gets pushed up and down. Imagine you have a balloon in your tummy, inflating it as you breathe in, and deflating as you breathe out. When we get scared, we breathe too quickly and shallowly and our body begins to panic because we're not getting enough oxygen. This causes dizziness, shakiness and more panic. Breathing slower and deeper will stop the panic.

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**Rub your arms and legs**.  If you have lost a sense of your body, rub your arms and legs so you can feel where your body starts and ends, the boundary of you. Wrap yourself in a blanket and feel it around you.

**Walk**, and really think about walking - mindfully.  Notice the way your body moves, how your feet move and feel as you walk, notice your leg muscles, and the way your arms feel as they swing.  Notice the movement in your hair, and the sensation of moving air on your skin.  Notice the sensations of breathing as you walk.

**Describe** (and say out loud if appropriate) what you are doing right now, in great detail.  Or describe doing a routine activity.

Try to **think about different things**, almost like playing mental games, for example:  count backwards in 7s from 100, think of 10 different animals, 10 blue things, one animal or country for each letter of the alphabet, say the alphabet slowly, say the alphabet backwards etc.

Carry a **grounding object** with you.  Some people carry a stone or other small object, perhaps which has personal meaning, to comfort and touch when you need to.

**Get support** if you would like it. Let people close to you know about how anxiety affects you, so they can help if you want them to. That might mean holding you, talking to you, helping you to reconnect with the present, to remember you are safe and cared for now.  If there is no-one, use a [**helpline**](https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/helplines.htm).

**Self Care**:  Take time to look after yourself. You could have a warm, relaxing bath or a sleep, a warm drink, play some soothing [**music**](https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/music.htm), or just take some quiet time for yourself. Be kind to yourself.

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**Ask yourself questions** in order to bring yourself into the present. Write down your own questions, for example:

* Where am I, right now?
* What day is it?
* What year is it?
* How old am I?
* Where do I live?

Use [**Positive Coping Statements**](https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/positive.htm).  You might prepare a coping statement, for example:  "I am (name), I am safe right now, this is just a thought that is making me feel this way. I am in (place) and the date is (date).  This anxiety will pass".

Make an [**emergency or soothe box**](https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/emergency.htm) you can use another time, and fill it with meaningful and helpful objects or reminders.

**Download an mp3** onto your phone such as First Aid for Panic, or use another.

Remember you are not crazy – **we all experience anxiety.**

When you feel ready, you might want to [**write down**](https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/write.htm) about the anxiety or panic that you felt and how you got through it. This will help to remind you that you did get through it, and can again.

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