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# **Balance & Breath**



**A mindful path to  
emotional wellness and  
resilience.**

# Grounding and Mindfulness Practices

The practice of grounding and mindfulness is essentially bringing ourselves back to the present moment and being in the here and now.

Life can be extremely busy and we are forever thinking into the future, worrying, catastrophising, leading to unease, anxiety, panic and low mood. These four somatic and grounding exercises are a way to reconnect with yourself when things feel a little overwhelming.

## 4-6 Belly Breathing

A simple breathwork practice to calm the mind and body

**What is 4-6 Belly Breathing?**

This technique involves breathing in through the nose for 4 seconds and out through the mouth for 6 seconds, while focusing on breathing from the belly (diaphragm) instead of the chest.

The longer exhale helps activate the parasympathetic nervous system, which promotes relaxation and reduces anxiety.

**How to Practice:**

### **1. Find a Comfortable Position**

- Sit or lie down with your back supported, this applies if you are in a space to do so and feel comfortable to lay down. If you are sitting or standing, check your posture, keep your back straight and chest open.
- Rest one hand on your belly and the other on your chest.

### **2. Inhale Through Your Nose (4 seconds)**

- Slowly breathe in for a count of 4.
- Focus on expanding your belly outward—not your chest.

### **3. Exhale Gently Through Your Mouth (6 seconds)**

- Slowly breathe out for a count of 6.
- Feel your belly fall as you empty the air.

### **4. Repeat for 5–10 rounds**

- Keep your focus on the rhythm of your breath.
- Let thoughts come and go without judgment.

### **Use It When You Need To:**

- Feeling anxious, panicked, or overwhelmed
- Before sleep to calm the body
- During moments of high emotion (anger, fear, grief)
- As part of a daily mindfulness routine
- Before a therapy session or difficult conversation

### **Quick Tips:**

- Don't force the breath, keep it smooth and steady
- If 6 seconds feels too long at first, try 4 in / 5 out, and work up.
- Try pairing this with soothing imagery, a comforting phrase, or hand on heart for extra grounding

### **Affirmation to Pair With Your Breath:**

Inhale: "I am safe"

Exhale: "I am calm"

## **Safe Place Visualisation**

Safe Place Visualization is a guided imagery technique where you imagine a place, real or imaginary, where you feel completely safe, calm, and peaceful. It helps activate the relaxation response and create emotional safety.

Close your eyes, or soften your gaze.

Start to imagine a place where you feel safe, calm and at peace. This may be a real place or one you imagine.

Familiarise yourself with the surroundings of your safe space, trying to see as much detail as possible, the smell, the colours, the sounds, is it dark or light? What are your feet touching, what is the texture like?

What does it feel like to be in this place? Can you ease yourself into this feeling?

Stay there for a minute or so. When you are ready, bring yourself back to the here and now, bringing some of that safety with you.

## **Wall Push Exercise**

The Wall Push Exercise is a simple, grounding, and somatic technique often used to manage anxiety, panic, dissociation, or overwhelm. It helps release nervous energy, reconnect to the body, and re-establish a sense of physical control and safety.

Stand facing a wall. Place your hands flat against it with your fingers spread, ground your feet firmly to the floor. Begin pressing gently into the wall, not attempting to move it. Focus on your breathing, in through the nose and out the mouth. Notice the sensations, feel your muscles tensing and perhaps resisting the movement. Then release and take a deep breath. Continue for another 3-5 rounds.

What do you notice once finished?

## **Five Senses Grounding Technique - 5-4-3-2-1**

**Purpose:** Calm your nervous system by focusing attention away from racing thoughts and onto your surroundings.

**Time:** 1-5 minutes

**Where:** Anywhere—at home, work, or in public.

### **1. Notice FIVE things you can SEE**

Look around and name five things you can see right now.

Example: “A blue chair, a tree outside the window, my hands, a coffee cup, the pattern on the wall.”

### **2. Notice FOUR things you can FEEL (touch)**

Notice and name four things you can physically feel.

Example: “The chair under me, my feet on the floor, my sweater on my arms, my phone in my hand.”

### **3. Notice THREE things you can HEAR**

Close your eyes if helpful and tune into your environment.

Example: “A car outside, the hum of a fridge, someone talking nearby.”

### **4. Notice TWO things you can SMELL**

Take a deep breath and try to identify smells around you.

Example: “Soap on my hands, coffee in the air.”

If you can't smell anything, name two smells you like.

### **5. Notice ONE thing you can TASTE**

Focus on your mouth.

Example: “The mint from toothpaste, the aftertaste of tea.”

If you can't taste anything, imagine a favourite flavour.

Breathe slowly as you move through each step. Try to say each observation out loud if possible—it helps your brain shift out of anxiety mode.

### **When to Use It:**

- During moments of stress, anxiety, or panic
- After a triggering memory or situation
- To ground yourself before sleep or after waking from a nightmare
- Anytime you feel overwhelmed or detached