ANXIETY AND PANIC

Grounding when panic rises

A five-sense exercise to steady you in the moment

Panic arrives fast. Your heart races, your breathing tightens and your mind shouts of danger. Grounding brings your attention back to the room you are in while the wave passes.

What happens in panic

Your body releases adrenaline, as if facing a threat. This causes a fast heartbeat, breathlessness, dizziness, tingling or a sense of unreality. The feelings are frightening. A panic attack peaks within minutes and then eases.

If you have never had these symptoms checked, see your GP first. Once a doctor has ruled out a physical cause, you learn to treat the sensations as false alarms.

Why grounding helps

Panic pulls attention inward, onto sensations and frightening thoughts. Naming what you see, hear and touch shifts attention outward. A longer out-breath slows the body's alarm response.

The aim is to ride the wave. Fighting panic tends to feed it.

The exercise

1. Breathe in through your nose for a count of four. Breathe out slowly for a count of six. Repeat five times.
2. Name 5 things you see. Say them out loud or in your head.
3. Name 4 things you feel or touch. Your feet on the floor. The chair behind you.
4. Name 3 things you hear.
5. Name 2 things you smell.
6. Name 1 thing you taste, or one kind sentence to yourself.

Tips

- ✓ Practise when you feel calm. Skills learned at rest are easier to reach under stress.
- ✓ Avoid escaping the situation the moment panic starts, if it is safe to stay. Each time you stay, your brain learns the alarm was false.
- ✓ Write your own reminder sentence on the card and keep it in your wallet or phone.

Want support with this? Joseph offers online therapy across the UK. **act-cognitive-therapy.com/start-therapy** or call or WhatsApp 0750 001 6004.

Important. This worksheet supports therapy. It does not replace it. If you feel unsafe or at risk, contact your GP, call NHS 111 and choose the mental health option, call Samaritans free on 116 123, or call 999 in an emergency.

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Practise and record

Fill in the five senses during a practice run. Use the log after real episodes to spot patterns.

5 things I see

4 things I feel or touch

3 things I hear

2 things I smell

1 thing I taste, or a kind sentence

Panic log

Date and time	Where was I?	Peak 0–10	What I did	Minutes until it eased	What I learned

CUT OUT AND KEEP

My reminder: This is a false alarm. It peaks and passes. I stay and breathe out slowly.

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