

5-4-3-2-1 GROUNDING TECHNIQUE FOR ANXIETY

All of us experience anxiety at some point in our life. Being a student means you will experience anxiety at different times of the academic year. Some level of anxiety is health and normal!

For some students the weeks or days leading up to the exam may result in peaks in anxiety levels. With the current Covid 19 pandemic, anxiety levels may shoot through the roof. Being isolated from loved ones, being unable to meet up with friends can make even the calmest person stressed. One way of managing your anxiety without others noticing you're anxious is the grounding technique. So if you suffer from high anxiety or panic attacks, this technique works really well if you're feeling unusually anxious especially in the exam room

The grounding technique 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. When we are anxious, we tend to forget how to breath slowly and deeply from the bottom of our tummies. This in turn makes our anxiety and panic worse. Remember when you are anxious, your brain shuts down, and your mind goes blank. So learning how to keep calm in an anxiety provoking situation is very, very important.

So before starting this technique, pay attention to your breath. Notice where in your body you feel most stressed. With your eyes open, start by taking a slow, deep, long breath. Breath in through your nose, hold it for 5 seconds and out through your mouth. Do this 3 times. This will help relax you and allows you to breath more normally returning you to a

calmer and less overwhelming state. You can do this in the chair you are sitting in, while standing or even lying down.

Once you find your breath, go through the following steps to help ground yourself which shifts your mind away from your anxious state:

5: Identify FIVE things you can see around you. It could be a desk, pen, your shoe, a bird, anything in your surroundings.

4: Identify FOUR things you can touch. Your nose, your hand/fingers, the ground under your feet, or your tongue against the roof of your mouth/the gum you are chewing.

3: Identify 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: Identify TWO things you can smell. Maybe you are in your office and smell pencil, the perfume you or someone else near you is wearing 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: Identify ONE thing you can taste. What does the inside of your mouth taste like—gum, coffee, or the sandwich from lunch?

This technique is one of many options you could use if you are feeling anxious or overwhelmed.