

Simple Breathing & Grounding

Things that actually work when you're spinning out

STILL DAD

BOX BREATHING (4-4-4-4)

Used by military and emergency responders to regulate the nervous system fast. Works in under 2 minutes.

INHALE 4 Breathe in slowly	HOLD 4 Lungs full, stay still
EXHALE 4 Breathe out slowly	HOLD 4 Lungs empty, stay still

Repeat 4–6 times. Breathe from your belly, not your chest. Count in your head. That's all there is to it.

2-MINUTE BODY SCAN

Lie down or sit with your back supported. Close your eyes.

- 1 Start at your feet.**
Notice any tension, warmth, tingling, or numbness. Don't try to change it. Just notice.
- 2 Move slowly upward.**
Calves, knees, thighs, hips. Spend a breath on each area.
- 3 Torso, chest, shoulders.**
This is where most people carry stress. Notice it without trying to fix it.
- 4 Neck, jaw, forehead.**
Are you clenching your jaw? Most people are.
- 5 Take one full breath.**
Exhale slowly. Open your eyes. Done.

These aren't "wellness" techniques. They're physiological tools for interrupting your stress response. They work because they work, not because of any belief system attached to them.

5-4-3-2-1 GROUNDING

Use when your mind won't stop or you feel detached from the moment. Forces your brain to engage the present.

5 Things you can SEE.

Name them out loud or in your head. Be specific: "the corner of the table," not just "the table."

4 Things you can TOUCH.

Feel the texture of each one. Name it.

3 Things you can HEAR.

Background sounds count. Traffic, HVAC, your own breathing.

2 Things you can SMELL.

If you can't smell anything, think of a smell you like.

1 Thing you can TASTE.

A drink of water counts.

WHEN TO USE WHICH

SITUATION	BEST TOOL
Before a tense phone call or handoff	Box breathing (2 min before)
Racing thoughts at night	Body scan in bed
Panic or dissociation mid-day	5-4-3-2-1 grounding
After a hostile message	Box breathing before you respond
Before an attorney meeting	Box breathing in the car
Overwhelmed, can't focus	5-4-3-2-1 grounding