

Grounding Exercises

1. Breathe slowly and steadily from your core. Imagine letting fear and worry go, evaporating along with each breath.
2. Trace your hands against the physical outline of your body. Experience your own presence in the world.
3. If you are feeling 'stuck', change how you're positioned. Wiggle your fingers, tap your feet. Pay attention to the movement: You are in control of what your body is doing, right here and now.
4. Eat or drink something. Is it hot, or cold? Sweet, or sour?
5. Meditate, if that's okay for you. Otherwise use distractions (TV, music) to settle down.
6. Use your voice. Say your name or pick up a book and read the first paragraph you find out loud.
7. Look at yourself in the mirror. Smile, even if that's the last thing you feel like! How does that feel? What can you see? (If negative thoughts come to mind, write them down to look at later but let them go for now. You're anxious enough as it is.)
8. Write out what's going on. Keep writing until you start to notice it makes a difference, let some of the things you're anxious about out.
9. Take a shower/bath. Notice the sensations of the water.
10. Write an email to someone you care about.
11. Imagine yourself in a familiar, comfortable place. Feel the safety. Know it.
12. Take a look outside. Count the number of trees and street signs.
13. Exercise. Jump up and down on the spot. Try some gentle yoga, or go for a short walk.
14. Hold onto something comforting. Maybe a blanket or an old stuffed toy.
15. Laugh. Even if that's hard. Just the act of laughing about something, anything can break that spinning out of control feeling.
16. When you're not too stressed, make a list of the things that provoke your anxiety. Take it to your therapist and talk. Then those triggers won't be quite so powerful, and your anxiety coping skills will work better.
17. If you get PTSD flashbacks: when you're feeling okay, make a list of the furniture in your home and what room it's in. Give the list to a friend/roommate/partner you can call to help you focus on what's now and safe.
18. List 5 really positive things in your life. Put the list where you'll see it and remember that there's more to the world than just panic and fear.
19. Think about the last week. Was there a day/hour/moment that you didn't have so much anxiety? Remember how it felt to be less anxious than you are right now. What was different? What can change?