

Anxiety Calming Tools

The 54321 Method

The 54321 (or 5, 4, 3, 2, 1) method is a grounding exercise designed to manage acute stress and reduce anxiety. It involves identifying 5 things you can see, 4 things you can touch, 3 things you can hear, 2 things you can smell, and 1 thing you can taste. By doing so, it helps shift your focus from anxiety-provoking thoughts to the present moment.(1)

Anxiety 333 Method

The 3-3-3 rule is another grounding technique aimed at reducing anxiety. In this method, you identify 3 things you can see, 3 things you can touch, and then take 3 deep breaths. While it's less comprehensive than the 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 method, it serves a similar purpose—providing quick relief from acute anxiety by refocusing your attention on the present moment. In the end, choose whatever method works best for you. (1)

Square Breathing

Box breathing, also referred to as **square breathing**, is a deep breathing technique that can help you slow down your breathing. It works by distracting your mind as you count to four, calming your nervous system, and decreasing stress in your body. (2)

Look for Your Favorite Color

Look around for your favorite color and tell a friend or family member what you see. Try to find 5 things you see in your favorite color. This exercise works to distract you from your anxious thoughts by refocusing your attention to your present surroundings.

Butterfly Hug

The Butterfly Hug was developed by Lucina Artigas in 1998 as a tool to help quiet anxiety for survivors of Hurricane Pauline in Acapulco, Mexico. (3) A simple handout with instructions is included with your workshop materials. This tool is easy to learn and can be self-directed any time there is a need to quiet the mind from anxious thoughts.

1 <https://www.calm.com/blog/5-4-3-2-1-a-simple-exercise-to-calm-the-mind>

2 <https://www.webmd.com/balance/what-is-box-breathing>

3 <https://irp.cdn-website.com/4193fbeb/files/uploaded/soothing-butterfly-hug.pdf>