5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Technique

A trauma-informed educational wellness worksheet for reflection, choice, self-care, and support.

Use this at your own pace. Skip, adapt, pause, or stop. You are allowed to choose what fits your body, culture, privacy, energy, safety, access needs, and real-life limits today.

This is a reflection tool, not a test. One honest sentence, one checked box, or one small next step can be enough.

5 4 3 2 1 Grounding Technique

A printable reflection and practice resource Created by Michelle D. Elder, MSW, LMHC. This worksheet is a free educational wellness resource from My Reflective Collective.

- Use what supports you. Skip, pause, adapt, or connect with a licensed therapist, healthcare provider, advocate, or trusted support if reflection brings something up.

Please read before using this resource 5-4-3-2-1 grounding technique

Grounding, Anxiety & Present-Moment Skills

This does not replace therapy This worksheet is a general educational and self-reflection resource. It is not individual therapy, group therapy, counseling, medical or psychiatric care, diagnosis, treatment, legal advice, or crisis intervention. It may be used alongside therapy or other qualified professional support when that is appropriate for you, but it does not replace those services.

- Use choice and care You may skip a question, adapt an activity, pause, or stop. Some topics or exercises may bring up discomfort, strong emotions, memories, dizziness, or physical sensations. Clinical or wellness terms are used only for general education and are not a personalized assessment or recommendation.

Seek appropriate support Consult an appropriately qualified professional about your individual mental health, physical health, medications, safety, legal matter, or treatment decisions. No outcome is promised, and information or external links may change.

Emergency and crisis needs text 988 for suicide or crisis support. Call 911 for an immediate emergency when that is safe and appropriate. Outside the United States, use local emergency or crisis resources.

Created by Michelle D. Elder with AI used as a collaborative drafting and organizing tool to support self-growth and reflection. AI-assisted material can contain errors or oversimplifications. This resource has educational intent and should not be treated as personalized professional judgment. reviewed for web immediate danger or medical emergency. Call or text 988 in the U.S. or Canada for suicide or mental health crisis support. Copyright Michelle publication: June 27, 2026. 5-4-3-2-1groundingtechnique The5-4-3-2-1groundingtechniqueisasimpleandeffectivewaytohelpcalmanxietyor stressbyconnectingtothepresent moment throughthefivesenses. It helpsredirect your attentionawayfromdistressingthoughtsandbringsyoubackintothe"hereandnow."

Here'showtodoit:

1. Acknowledge5thingsyoucansee:

l Lookaroundyouandfocusonfivethingsinyour environment. Theycanbesmall orlarge, near or far. For example, "I seetheBluesky, thelight reflectingoff thetable, apaintingonthewall," etc.

2. Acknowledge4thingsyoucantouch:

l Noticefour thingsyoucanphysicallyfeel. Focusonthetexture, temperature, orsensation. For example, "I feel thesmoothnessof myphone, thesoftnessof myshirt,thegroundunder myfeet," etc.

3. Acknowledge3thingsyoucanhear:

l Tuneintothreedistinct soundsaroundyou. Theycouldbeobviousor subtle. Forexample, "I hear birdschirpingoutside, thehumof therefrigerator, andthesoundof mybreathing."

4. Acknowledge2thingsyoucansmell:

l Identifytwosmellsinyour immediatesurroundings. If youcan't smell anything, thinkoftwoscentsyoulikeor grabsomethingnearbytosmell, likecoffeeor ascentedcandle.

5. Acknowledge1thingyoucantaste:

l Focusononethingyoucantaste. It couldbesomethingyou'veeatenrecentlyor just thetasteof your mouth. If possible, takeasipof water or asmall snacktofocusonthetaste.

Thistechniquehelpsgroundyouinyour bodyandenvironment, calmingyour nervoussystemanddistractingyoufromoverwhelmingthoughts.

It'squickandeasytopracticeanytimeyoufeelanxiousor disconnected. danger or medical emergency. Call or text 988 in the U.S. or Canada for suicide or mental health crisis support. Copyright Michelle D. Elder, MSW, LMHC. My Reflective Collective.

More free My Reflective Collective tools Printable links below. The worksheet wording itself is unchanged.

Scan the QR code or use the first link to open this worksheet online.

The online reader can support read-aloud tools and browser translation.

Read/listen to this worksheet online https://myreflectivecollective.com/worksheet-reader.html?file=5-4-3-2-1-grounding-technique.pdf Positive affirmations and short mantras Scan to read/listen https://myreflectivecollective.com/affirmations.html Soundscapes and grounding audio tools https://myreflectivecollective.com/soundscapes.html More free worksheets and PDFs https://myreflectivecollective.com/resource-center.html Crisis and safety resources https://myreflectivecollective.com/crisis-resources.html Website disclaimer

https://myreflectivecollective.com/disclaimer.html

Educational wellness notice This worksheet and website offer educational wellness and self-reflection tools only.

They are not therapy, diagnosis, medical care, legal advice, crisis care, or individualized safety planning.

Pause or stop any activity that feels wrong, unsafe, inaccessible, or too much.

For immediate danger or a medical emergency, call 911. In the U.S., call or text 988 for crisis support.

Michelle D. Elder, MSW, LMHC | My Reflective Collective

Safety, Privacy & Educational Use

My Reflective Collective - Michelle D. Elder, Msw, Lmhc

If there is immediate danger or a medical emergency: Call 911 in the United States or use your local emergency number. For U.S. suicide or mental-health crisis support, call or text 988. For relationship-safety support, contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 800-799-7233, text START to 88788, or visit TheHotline.org from a safer device when possible.

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_____ Privacy and safer searching If someone may monitor your device, accounts, internet connection, location, downloads, or browser activity, consider using a safer device and a trusted network. Private browsing may reduce locally saved history but does not make activity invisible. Clearing history can also be noticed. A website Quick Exit button changes the page; it cannot erase browser, download, router, account, employer, school, carrier, or device records. Choose only steps that feel safer in your situation.

Do not store identifying or safety-sensitive answers where another person may find them.

Educational scope and professional limits This resource provides general psychoeducation, reflection, and wellness support. It is not therapy, counseling, diagnosis, assessment, treatment, medical advice, legal advice, crisis response, forensic evaluation, or an individualized safety plan.

It does not replace care from a licensed clinician, healthcare professional, attorney, trained advocate, emergency service, or other qualified professional. Laws, court procedures, services, and risks vary by location and circumstance.

Choice, pacing, and inclusion You may skip, change, discuss, dictate, draw, pause, or stop any activity. No exercise can determine what you experienced, diagnose a condition, prove a legal claim, guarantee safety, or tell you whether to stay, leave, report, reconcile, forgive, or pursue court action. Adapt language and activities for culture, identity, disability, neurotype, age, literacy, sensory needs, and personal preference. Automatic translation can make mistakes; confirm legal, medical, emergency, and safety-critical wording with a qualified person.

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