

Relaxation & Grounding Techniques

These are practical, physical ways to bring the body's alarm system down a notch — useful in the middle of anxiety, panic, or overwhelm, and worth practising when calm too, so they're more available when you actually need them.

Slow breathing

Breathe in gently through the nose for a count of four, then out through the mouth for a count of six — longer on the out-breath than the in-breath. This isn't about taking a huge breath; a normal-sized breath, slowed down, is what shifts the body out of alarm mode. A few minutes is usually enough to notice a difference.

Progressive muscle relaxation

Working through the body one muscle group at a time — feet, calves, thighs, stomach, hands, arms, shoulders, face — tense each group firmly for about five seconds, then release and notice the contrast as it relaxes. The releasing, and noticing it, is the part that does the work.

5-4-3-2-1 grounding

Useful when things feel distant, unreal, or overwhelming. Name, out loud or silently: 5 things you can see, 4 things you can hear, 3 things you can feel (texture, temperature), 2 things you can smell, 1 thing you can taste. This brings attention back into the present moment through the senses.

Which ones work for you?

Not every technique lands the same way for everyone. Use the space below to note what you tried and how it went, so you build a personal sense of what actually helps.

Technique	When I used it	How it went

Grounded in standard relaxation and grounding techniques used across CBT, DBT, and trauma-focused therapies (e.g. Jacobson's progressive muscle relaxation).