

SENSORY AWARENESS

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Smell

Brew calming herbal teas such as chamomile, and enjoy the soothing aroma.

Incorporate aromatherapy into your daily life. Different scents or essential oils can have different effects on the body. Try bath products with an energizing scent such as lemon or eucalyptus for your morning shower, or a lavender pillow spray before bed.

Keep fresh flowers or herbs like rosemary or mint in your space to enjoy their natural scents.

Make scent a part of your wardrobe – try linen sprays, drawer liners and shoe sachets.



Using the 5-4-3-2-1 technique is a very quick and accessible way to ground yourself in the present moment.

If you have more time, or are looking to incorporate opportunities to be mindful into your daily routine, try some of these ideas!

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Taste

Chew peppermint gum or suck on a peppermint candy to ease nausea and boost focus.

Vivid taste sensations, such as biting into a sour candy, can help pull focus from spiraling thoughts.

Practice mindful eating. Eat slowly, savoring each bite and chewing thoroughly. Notice the smells, textures, tastes and temperatures of the food, and acknowledge any reactions you may have without judgment.



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Hearing

Create different playlists for when you want to invoke certain feelings, such as a power playlist to motivate your exercise routine, or calming instrumentals for relaxation after work hours.

Go for a walk and pay careful attention to the sounds around you, especially those you may normally screen out, like the hum of cicadas or wind rustling through leaves.

Explore using different frequencies that have been proven to help with sleep and stress reduction, such as binaural beats, brown noise and white noise.



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Sight

Engage in a guided meditation with visualization exercises, such as imagining yourself exploring a favorite place or a tranquil setting.

Pick a color, and notice all the things that color you can find. Try this exercise with as many colors, shapes, sizes and textures as you can, bringing your full awareness to the present moment and the environment around you.

Keep a picture of something or someone you love handy and focus on it when you're feeling overwhelmed. Use the image as a reminder to practice self-compassion.



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Touch

Hold a tiny object, like a grounding stone or a favorite good luck charm, and notice how its weight, texture, and each small contour feels in your hand.

Alternate between hot and cold water in the shower. The contrast will invigorate your senses, and spending time in cold water activates the vagus nerve system, triggering relaxation, inflammation reduction and a lowered heart rate.

Go for a nature walk and touch different natural elements like leaves, trees and rocks to connect with the earth. Go barefoot!



VWDCONNECT
FOUNDATION

5-4-3-2-1 GROUNDING TECHNIQUE

Many sources of stress or overwhelm can come from thinking about the past or worrying about the future. Grounding is the process of bringing our attention and awareness to the present moment. This can help soothe the mind and interrupt any cycles of spiraling thoughts. This will help us become more calm, focused, and equipped to show up in the moment as our most authentic selves.

One popular grounding technique is the 5-4-3-2-1 method. You can do this at any time, any place, alone out loud or quietly to yourself in the presence of others.

Try to practice this method even in times when you are not overwhelmed, so it will feel more familiar and natural in the times you need it most.

Engaging the senses can be helpful as reminders to practice mindfulness throughout the day. Try the examples on the other side, experiment and find what works for you!

Place your feet flat on the ground and feel the earth beneath you. Inhale through the nose and exhale through the mouth. Try to find stillness and use your senses to name:

5 **Five things you can see:** Look around you as if you are seeing your surroundings for the first time. Identify five things you can see: they can be objects, colors, or shapes. Notice their details.

4 **Four things you can hear:** Quiet your own thoughts and identify four sounds you can hear. Notice sounds you'd normally tune out, like your computer or the sound of your breathing.

3 **Three things you can touch:** Scan your body and identify three things you can physically feel. The ground under your feet or clothes against your skin would be good places to start.

2 **Two things you can smell:** Identify two scents in the air. It might be hard to notice at first. Maybe it's a lingering aroma from lunch, or the fabric softener on your couch. Close your eyes if it helps.

1 **One thing you can taste:** Notice if your jaw is clenched and relax the muscles in your face to concentrate on identifying one thing you can taste. Coffee? Medication? Toothpaste?

