

Nervous System Resets

Quick Grounding techniques to Use in High Stress Moments

When stress levels rise, thinking harder does not help.

Regulate your body first. Clarity follows.

Pull out these tools when you're feeling overwhelmed, tight and stressed, mentally sluggish or can't seem to settle down.

5-4-3-2-1 Sensory Reset

Interrupt Overthinking.

Pause and look around you.

- 5 things you can see
- 4 things you can physically feel
- 3 things you can hear
- 2 things you can smell
- 1 thing you can taste

Be specific. Specifics anchor your mind in the here and now and distract you from spiraling thoughts.

Box Breathing

Slow Your System Down

- Inhale for 4
- Hold for 4
- Exhale for 4
- Hold for 4

Repeat for 1–3 minutes.

If you can, have the exhale be slightly longer than the inhale. When you do a longer exhale, that tells the nervous system it's safe to settle.

Alternate Nostril Breathing

Rebalance Focus & Calm

- Inhale through your left nostril
- Exhale through your right
- Inhale through your right
- Exhale through your left

Continue slowly for 1–2 minutes.

This patterned breathing helps steady racing thoughts and regain focus.

Rooting Exercise

Channel your Favorite Tree to Feel Stable Again

- Stand with feet-flat on the floor.

- Softly press your feet down as if sinking roots into the earth.
- Slightly bend your knees.
- Let your shoulders drop.
- Hold for 3–5 breaths, continuing to press evenly through your feet.

Growing starts at the base.

Hand Warmth Reset

Quick Calm

- Rub your hands together rapidly for 15–20 seconds.
- Rest your warm hands on your cheeks or along your jawline.
- Take three slow breaths.

Warmth and soft pressure are things that help signal safety to your nervous system.

When to Use These Tools

- During anxiety spikes
- Before difficult conversations
- After stressful events
- When you become emotional or unfocused
- Late at night when you can't sleep

A Final Note

- Stress responses are not flaws. They are protective.
- These are not tools that erase emotion, but to settle you to be able to experience the emotions in a more grounded state.
- They're about helping your body feel firm enough to move through it.
- Some gentle, iterative resets are more effective than occasional dramatic ones.