

Exercise #2: 5-4-3-2-1

This exercise is easy to remember and can be done almost anywhere. It also involves “getting out of your head” and “into your body” to induce presence and peace.

- Start by closing your eyes and taking several deep breaths. Focus on your breathing, slow, comfortable and consistent. After five breaths (or more if you wish) slowly open your eyes and look around, calmly and carefully observing.
- Start with Five: Look around and notice what is in your field of vision. Name five things, aloud or to yourself, that you see. It may be a picture on the wall, a crack in the cement, the stapler on your desk, the tree outside – anything. Continue to breath, deeply and slowly.
- Four: Now focus on your bodily sensations and name four things you can touch or feel. You may notice the sensation of your clothing touching your skin, you may slowly reach into your pocket and feel a coin with your fingertips, you may feel your feet firmly planted on the ground or the pillow underneath your head.
- Three: Focus on what you hear. Really focus. Even in a quiet room, if we tune in closely, we can hear the lights humming, the wind blowing, traffic or voices in the distance. Focus on three sound and name them. Continue to breath, deeply and slowly.
- Two: Now focusing on your sense of smell, take a moment and see if you can name two scents in your environment. You might reach for your coffee or tea and inhale deeply or smell the freshly cut grass outside. You can also carry a pleasant smell with you for this exercise, such as a small bottle of essential oil, your favorite perfume or a scented lip balm.
- One: Lastly, focus on your sense of taste. You may notice the lingering taste of toothpaste, the coffee you drank this morning or your sandwich from lunch. Name one taste. For this step you can prepare, if desired, by carrying something with you that you enjoy the taste of, such as a piece of candy or gum. Continue to breath, slowly and consistently.
- Repeat this exercise as desired. You can move from 5-4-3-2-1 and then back up through 1-2-3-4-5