

The 5-4-3-2-1 technique

Explanation: This is a grounding technique that comes from mindfulness and is useful because it is quick, easy and you can do it at almost any time or place to make an immediate difference. In fact, it takes less time to do than it takes to explain!

How to do it: First, notice five things you can see, then (and if you like you can shut your eyes, but you don't have to) notice four things you can feel – this can be things like your feet on the ground or your sleeve on your arm, or could also be internal things like feeling hungry. Now notice three things you can hear, then two things you can either smell or taste. Finally take one deep breath from your belly, with a longer outbreath, and then open your eyes (if they were closed). If you notice your thoughts drifting, don't worry, just gently bring them back to the exercise.

When it's useful: Any time you want to take a moment away and reset your emotions. Because you can do it anywhere, people won't even know that you're doing it. You can vary it with other techniques, such as noticing everything around you that's a particular colour or shape.

