

KEEP YOUR MIND GROUNDED

Do you feel like your mind is constantly racing? It's like a train running through a million thoughts, thinking about the past, the future, or all the things that went wrong or could go wrong. As people struggling with anxiety or trauma, instead of staying grounded on the platform, we run and launch ourselves on the anxiety train and our minds go somewhere else.

When this happens it's hard to sleep, to stay focused, or be around others.

The following exercise is designed to help you calm down and retrain your body and mind to stay grounded in the moment. The exercise can be used when you catch your mind wandering or if you notice you're about to have an anxiety or panic attack.

It's pretty hard to have two different thoughts in your head at one time. The goal is to fill your brain with thoughts on the here and now – and stop allowing your brain to go to the other place. The more you practice, the faster you'll notice your body and brain responding well.

HOP OFF THE TRAIN

Before you start, you must learn to catch yourself. It's hard to practice coping skills if you're on the anxiety train. Stop yourself from getting on – or get off the train if you're already on it. Sometimes we literally have to tell our minds, "Stop It!" After you do that, practice either of the two strategies below.

STAY GROUNDED PHYSICALLY

Touch is a powerful force for keeping your mind in the here and now.

- An object can help with fidgeting and refocusing. If you find an object you like, keep it in on hand and pull it out if you need it.
- Use your surroundings. If you're on a walk, touch a fence or a wall. If you're in the car, feel your seat or the door. If you're trying to sleep, feel the pillow on your face.

How does it feel? Is it cold? Rough? Does it have patterns? Describe it in your mind or out loud.

Describe it in a calm, rhythmic way. Talk through it until you feel your mind and your body calm down.

Feel free to interrupt your thoughts with words of affirmation like, "I've got this" or "I'm going to be ok."

5 SENSES

Use the following prompts to go through your environment in five senses.

I see _____ (Example: I see the wall)

I feel _____ (Example: I feel my toes)

I hear _____ (Example: I hear the cars)

I smell _____ (Example: I smell the dog)

I taste _____ (Example: I taste my drink)

You can talk through each of five senses. You don't have to do them in order or do all five. You don't even need to make sense. As long as your mind is talking through any of the statements above and not on anxious thoughts, you're good. Try to find a calm rhythmic pattern. Talk through it until you feel your mind and your body calm down. Feel free to interrupt your thoughts with words of affirmation like, "I've got this" or "I'm going to be ok."