

7 QUICK TECHNIQUES TO HELP REDUCE ANXIETY – FAST



Box Breathing (4-4-4-4)

You breathe in for 4 seconds, hold for 4, exhale for 4, and hold again for 4. Repeat this cycle a few times.

WHY IT HELPS:

It calms your body, slows racing thoughts, and shifts you out of fight-or-flight mode.

REPLACES:

Panic, shallow breathing

Cognitive Defusion (ACT)

When you have an anxious thought, add the phrase: "I'm having the thought that..." in front of it. E.g., "I'm having the thought that I'll mess this up."

WHY IT HELPS:

It creates distance from your thoughts, so you're not fused with them or controlled by them.

REPLACES:

Overthinking, stuck thoughts



5-4-3-2-1 Grounding

- 5 things you can see
- 4 you can touch
- 3 you can hear
- 2 you can smell
- 1 you can taste

WHY IT HELPS:

It interrupts spirals, grounds you in the now, and reconnects you with your body.

REPLACES: Dissociation, anxiety spirals



Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR)

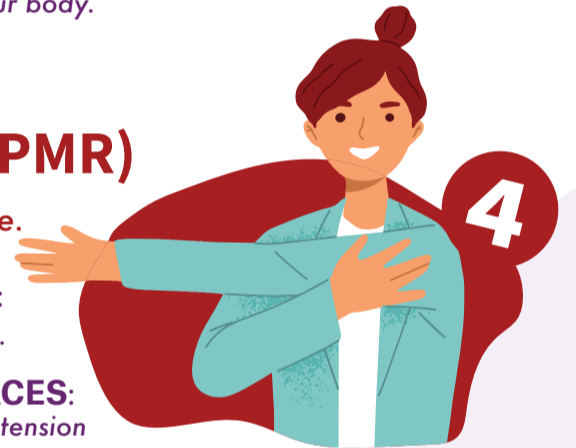
You slowly tense and then relax each muscle group (e.g., shoulders, hands, jaw), one at a time.

WHY IT HELPS:

It releases physical tension that often builds up with anxiety, helping your mind calm down too.

REPLACES:

Restlessness, tension



Cognitive Restructuring (CBT)

You question your anxious thoughts by asking:

- "What's the evidence for and against this?"
- "What's a more balanced thought?"

WHY IT HELPS:

It replaces unhelpful thinking with clearer, more realistic alternative

REPLACES:

Catastrophizing



Self-Soothing Mantras

Say something like: "This feeling will pass." or "I am safe right now."

WHY IT HELPS:

It quiets the inner critic, brings comfort, and reminds you of your resilience.

REPLACES:

Inner critic



Anchoring Objects or Visualization

Hold a small object (like a stone or bracelet) or visualize a peaceful place (like a beach or your favorite room).

WHY IT HELPS:

It acts as a "safety signal" to your brain and helps reduce panic or helplessness.

REPLACES:

Helplessness



MSF IMPACT Unit

Take charge of your mind, these tools aren't just tips, they're your power moves.