

5, 4, 3, 2, 1 Exercise

This exercise is also called “five senses,” and provides guidelines on practicing mindfulness quickly in nearly any situation. Use this exercise to quickly ground yourself in the present when you only have a moment. The goal is to notice something that you are currently experiencing through each of your senses.

Settle into your chair, get comfortable, and take a few deep breaths....

- Notice five things that you can see

Look around you and bring your attention to five things that you can see. Pick something that you don't normally notice, like a shadow, a small crack in the paint, a pattern on a wall, light reflecting on a surface, or dust collecting on a kick-knack in the corner of the room.

- Notice four things that you can *feel*.

Bring awareness to four things that you are currently feeling. Like the pressure of your feet on the floor, your shirt responding on your shoulders, the texture of your pants, the feeling of the breeze on your skin, the smooth surface of a table you are resting your hands on, or the temperature of your skin,.

- Notice three things you can *hear*.

Take a moment to listen, and note three background sounds that you have been filtering out. This can be the chirp of a bird, the hum of the refrigerator, the faint sounds of traffic outside, or the chatter of people talking on the street or in the hallway.

- Notice two things you can *smell*.

Bring your awareness to smells that you usually filter out, whether they're pleasant or unpleasant. Perhaps the breeze is carrying a whiff of flowers, coffee, food cooking, or garbage from the street.

- Notice one thing you can *taste*.

Focus on one thing that you can taste right now, at this moment. Take a sip of a drink, chew a piece of gum, eat something, simply notice the current taste in your mouth, or open your mouth to “taste” the air.

Take a deep breath and bring your focus back to the workshop. This is a quick and relatively easy exercise to bring you to a mindful state quickly. If you only have a minute or two, the five senses exercise can help you bring awareness to the current moment in a short amount of time.