



Come Back to Right Now

Six grounding practices for overwhelm, anxious spirals, intrusive thoughts, and the moment before maternal rage takes over. The goal is not to erase emotion. It is to create enough space to choose what happens next.

Choose the exercise that matches your body. If breath focus increases anxiety, use an external-senses, pressure, or movement option. Start with 30-90 seconds; more is not automatically better.

01

Name the Room, Not the Story

Try this when: your mind is forecasting, replaying, or stuck on an intrusive thought

1. Look around and name five neutral facts out loud: colors, shapes, textures, light, or distance.
2. Add the date, your location, and one present-tense truth: *I am in my kitchen. It is Tuesday. I am having a strong feeling, and I am here.*
3. Choose one object and describe it with enough detail that someone could draw it.

Notice: Did your attention move even 5% toward the room? That counts.

02

Feet Before Fixing

Try this when: you feel pushed to solve everything immediately

1. Put both feet flat. Press your heels down for 8 seconds without holding your breath.
2. Release for 5 seconds. Repeat three times.
3. Ask: *What is the next one-minute job - and what is not mine to solve right now?*

Notice: Look for a little more steadiness, not instant calm.



Give the energy somewhere safe to go

Pressure and tolerable sensory input can interrupt a fast escalation. Keep the effort controlled; grounding should never punish your body.

03

The Counter-Pressure Pause

Try this when: anger feels hot, fast, and ready to leave your body

1. If you are holding a baby, place them safely in a crib or another safe location first.
2. Press both palms into a wall or sturdy counter for 10 seconds at about half-strength.
3. Release slowly. Drop your shoulders. Repeat twice, then step back before speaking.

Notice: Can you delay the next reaction by one breath or one sentence?

04

Cool + Count

Try this when: your face feels flushed or your thoughts are racing

1. Run cool - not painfully cold - water over your hands, or hold a cool cloth to your cheeks.
2. Name three sensations: temperature, pressure, movement.
3. Count five slow exhales while keeping your eyes open and connected to the room.

Notice: If cold is unpleasant or triggering, use a textured towel or warm mug instead.



Build a bridge between moments

Transitions and small external anchors can widen attention when overload creates tunnel vision.

05

Doorway Reset

Try this when: you are moving from one demand to the next with no transition

1. Pause at a doorway and touch the frame with one hand.
2. Name what you are leaving and entering: *I am leaving the workday. I am entering family time.*
3. Choose one boundary for the next ten minutes: slower voice, no multitasking, water first, or ask for help.

Notice: Transitions are real nervous-system events, even when no one else sees them.

06

One Sound, One Texture, One Color

Try this when: a five-senses list feels like too much

1. Find one sound and listen until it changes or ends.
2. Touch one texture and notice three qualities: smooth/rough, warm/cool, firm/soft.
3. Find one color in three different places, then look back at the person or task in front of you.

Notice: A tiny external focus can be enough to interrupt tunnel vision.

WHEN A RESET IS NOT ENOUGH

If you are afraid you may hurt yourself or someone else, place your baby or child safely if you can, step away, and get help. Call 911 for imminent danger or call/text 988 for crisis support. For free 24/7 maternal mental-health support (not a crisis line), call/text 1-833-TLC-MAMA.

Evidence note: Grounding and relaxation are consistent with VA and SAMHSA trauma-informed guidance. Maternal anger research also points to sleep strain, unmet needs, expectations, and social support. Sources: VA National Center for PTSD; SAMHSA TIP 57; Ou et al., 2022; Balban et al., 2023.

Use note: Educational resource only; not therapy, diagnosis, or medical advice. Stop if an exercise increases distress, pain, dizziness, numbness, or panic.