

These exercises might take a bit of time and effort, or feel silly or unnatural at first - but just think how much time you might otherwise spend drinking to manage anxiety or stress!

Simple Grounding Technique for Anxiety

When you are feeling anxious or panicky it is usually when we are imagining what might happen, or are remembering something that has happened. Grounding exercises help to bring us back to the present moment, by giving us an awareness of our own bodies and the reality of now.

Stop. Breathe.

5. Name **FIVE things you can see** (say it out loud if you can, it makes it more real).
4. Name **FOUR things you can hear**.
3. Name **THREE things you can feel** (and touch them).
2. Name **TWO things you can smell**, or imagine two things you like the smell of.
1. Take **ONE slow, deep breath** in through the nose, and slowly out through the mouth.

Benson's Relaxation Technique for Reducing Stress

In his book *The Relaxation Response*, Dr Benson describes the scientific benefits of relaxation, explaining how regular practice of his relaxation technique can be an effective treatment for many stress-related disorders.

When you are feeling stressed you are experiencing a 'fight-or-flight' reaction, with increased heart rate and pulse, faster breathing, etc. This technique is one way you can turn off the fight-or-flight response and bring yourself back to a calmer place. It can be practiced every day.

This is the technique as [Dr. Benson](#) outlines it

1. Sit quietly in a comfortable position.
2. Close your eyes.
3. Deeply relax all your muscles, beginning at your feet and progressing up to your face. Keep them relaxed.
4. Breathe through your nose. Become aware of your breathing. As you breathe out, say a mantra word to yourself silently - choose any soothing word

preferably one with no meaning or association, to avoid stimulation of unnecessary thoughts. People often use 'one', 'om', 'ahh', 'calm' etc.

5. Begin with just 2-3 minutes a day, but aim to build up to 10-20 minutes. Open your eyes to check the time, rather than use an alarm.
6. When you finish, sit quietly for several minutes, at first with your eyes closed and later with your eyes opened. Do not stand up for a few minutes.
7. Do not worry about whether you are successful in achieving a deep level of relaxation. Maintain a passive attitude and permit relaxation to occur at its own pace.
8. □When distracting thoughts occur, let them pass by returning to your breath and your mantra.

With practice, you should be able to enter a state of relaxation with less and less effort as it becomes more automatic. Practice the technique once or twice a day, but not within two hours after a meal as the digestive processes seem to prevent complete relaxation.