

A Five-Minute Reset

Quick techniques for steadying yourself before, during or after a pressured moment

When pressure spikes, the body's threat response speeds up breathing and heart rate, narrows attention and makes it harder to think clearly. These techniques work on the body first, which is often the quickest route back to a clear head. Each takes five minutes or less and can be done at your desk or between meetings.

They are most effective when practised while you are calm, so they are familiar when you need them.

IF SOMEONE NEEDS HELP NOW

If there is an immediate risk to life, call **999**. Samaritans are available free, 24 hours a day, on **116 123**. In England, NHS 111 (option 2) connects to an urgent mental health service.

01

Five techniques

Longer out-breath

Breathe in through your nose for a count of four, then out slowly for a count of six to eight. Repeat for two minutes. A longer exhale helps signal to the body that it is safe to slow down.

Use it: before a difficult call or presentation.

5-4-3-2-1 grounding

Name five things you can see, four you can feel, three you can hear, two you can smell and one you can taste. It pulls attention out of looping thoughts and back into the present.

Use it: when your mind is racing.

Tense and release

Tense your shoulders up towards your ears for five seconds, then let them drop. Do the same with your hands and jaw. Notice the difference between tension and release.

Use it: after a long stretch at a screen.

Name it

Put a word to what you are feeling: "This is frustration", "This is worry about tomorrow." Naming an emotion tends to take some of the heat out of it.

Use it: when you notice a strong reaction building.

Move

Walk around the building, take the stairs or step outside for a few minutes. Movement uses up some of the energy the stress response creates.

Use it: between back-to-back meetings.

02

Your plan

SITUATION WHERE I NEED A RESET	TECHNIQUE I WILL USE	HOW I WILL REMIND MYSELF

These are tools for everyday pressure. If you are often overwhelmed, or the techniques do not help, talk to your GP or your Employee Assistance Programme.