



## **5-4-3-2-1 Grounding**

One remedy for dealing with stress is to focus attention on the present. While meditation is a useful tool for this, it can be hard to manage, largely because it should not be managed, but allowed to happen. Even with the app CALM that's designed to aid sleep, relaxation and stress reduction, my meditation practice is often derailed by a wandering mind that has me constantly "starting over."

Recently, I learned a new technique for focusing on the present from the American Association of Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Rehabilitation as part of my recovery from open heart surgery. It's called "5-4-3-2-1 Grounding". Here's how it works.

Take several deep, slow breaths. Then say aloud or write down these things in your present moment:

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

It's impossible to do this with a wandering mind. Once done, you will have fully engaged your attention in the present and away from stressful thoughts. You can do this practice anytime, anywhere...and it's free! Repeat as necessary for maximum effect.