

Actively  Achieve

A C H I E V E

RELIEF

T O O L K I T

USE THESE QUICK TOOLS ANYWHERE
NO ROUTINES, NO SCHEDULE, NO EXTRA TIME NEEDED.

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HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

This isn't meant to be read start to finish. It's meant to be used.

The best way to use it — go to the What You're Feeling Now section first. Find what matches where you are right now and start there. That section points you to the right technique for the moment you're actually in.

After that, flip through the techniques when you have a few minutes. Get familiar with them so when you need one, you're not searching.

A few things worth knowing:

- You don't have to like every technique. Find two or three that feel natural and stick with those.
- Some of them take a few tries before they feel effective. That's normal.
- This works best when you use it in the hard moment — not just when you're already calm.

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Come back to it. That's the point.





Not all stress relief techniques work the same way.

Start with the one that feels closest to what you're experiencing right now

WHAT YOUR FEELING NOW

*If you feel completely overwhelmed or stuck, go straight to the Overwhelm Rescue Plan (pg 24)

When you're overwhelmed and stuck

Everything feels like too much and you don't know where to start

Take one slow breath

**Say to yourself:
“I just need to do one thing”**

If you still feel overwhelmed:
Use the 60-Second Reset
(see page 13)

Take one small doable action



When you're **Overthinking Everything**

Your mind keeps going, replaying things, or jumping to worst-case scenarios.

Do a quick brain dump (1-2 min)

(see page 14)

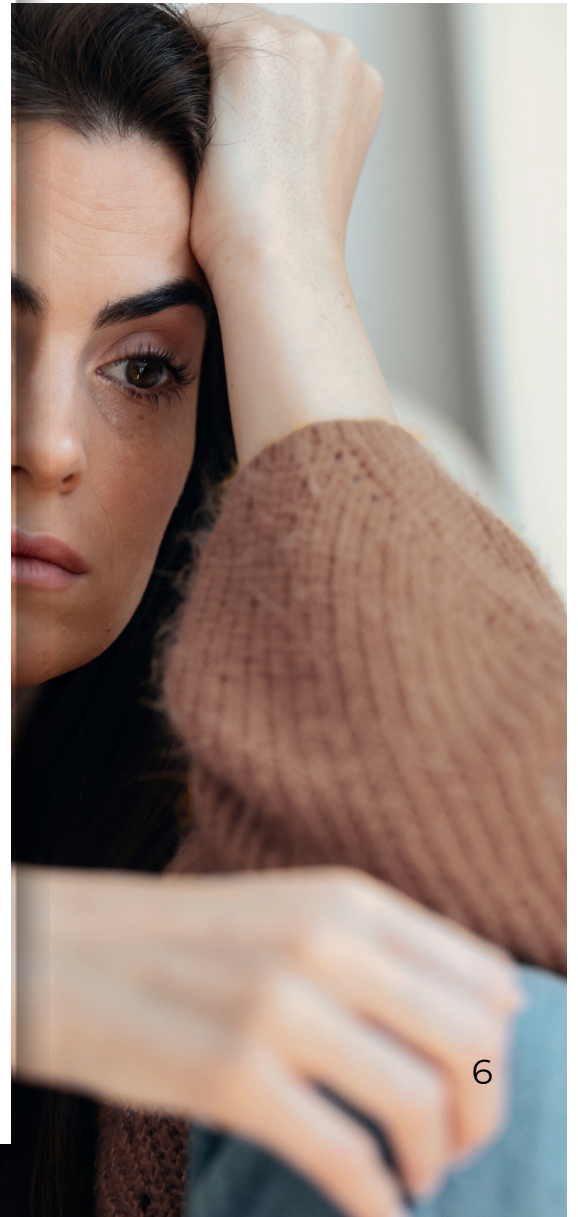
If your mind is still racing:

Use 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding

(see page 16)

Shift your focus to something in front of you.

You don't need to solve it - just need to interrupt the loop



When you're Snapping or Losing Patience

You feel short, irritated, or like you might say something you don't mean

Pause - even for a few seconds

Take 3 slow breaths

Step away if you can
(even briefly)

If you still feel on edge:
Use Shake it Out (pg 22)

You don't need to respond
perfectly - you just need a
moment.



When you're Avoiding Everything

You know what needs to get done... but you just can't get yourself to start

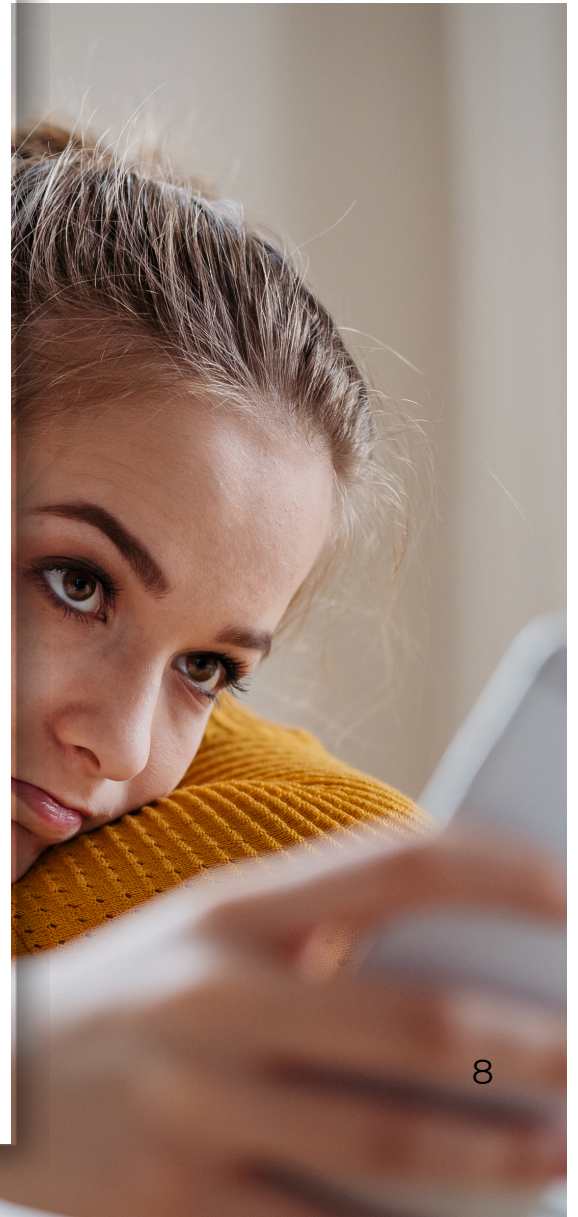
Don't think about the whole task
Just focus on one step

Set a 2-minute timer

Start small - Just begin

After 2 minutes -
Stop if you want or keep going

Starting is the hardest part -
once you move, it gets easier.



When you're Feeling on Edge

Nothing specific is wrong, but your body feels tense, restless, or off

Use Tense and Release
(pg 20)

If you're still feeling tense:
Use Deep Breath Reset (pg 19)

**Let the feeling pass
without overanalyzing it**

Not every feeling needs a reason





STRESS RESET TECHNIQUES



MENTAL RESET

Calm racing thoughts and overthinking

For:

Overthinking, mental overload, can't shut your brain off

- 60-Second Reset
- Brain Dump Reset
- Soft Gaze Reset

GROUND & RECENTER

Bring yourself back to the present moment

For:

Anxiety, overwhelm, feeling scattered or disconnected

- 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding
- Warm Cup Reset

Calming & Self Soothing

Help your body feel safe and supported

For:

Emotional overwhelm, anxiety, needing comfort

- Butterfly Hug
- Deep Breathing Reset

PHYSICAL RESET

Interrupt the stress response through your body

For:

Tension, Restlessness, Feeling on Edge, Built up Stress

- Tense & Release
- Cold Water Reset
- Shake It Out Reset
- Power Pose

GO-SECOND RESET

When stress feels unbearable, and you need immediate relief.

A fast technique to calm racing thoughts and regain focus.

- **Take one deep breath**
- **Say, “This is temporary.”**
- **Identify one small thing you CAN control right now.**
- **Take one action toward it, no matter how small.**

You don't need to fix everything, you just need to reset.

BRAIN DUMP TECHNIQUE

When your thoughts are racing, you're overthinking, or your mind won't slow down.

A quick way to clear your mind by getting everything out of your head and onto paper.

Helps your brain stop trying to hold onto everything at once, making it easier to calm down and refocus.

- **Set a timer for 1–2 minutes**
- **Write down everything that's on your mind—no organizing, no filtering**
- **Don't worry if it's messy, random, or incomplete**
- **Once it's out, take a breath and shift your focus to one thing in front of you**

You don't need to figure everything out - you just need to get it out of your head.

SOFT GAZE VISUAL RESET

When you feel overstimulated, mentally exhausted, or unable to focus.

A way to calm an overstimulated mind by shifting visual focus.

Helps reset the brain by switching from hyper-focus (stress mode) to soft peripheral vision (relaxation mode).

- **Instead of staring at a screen or object, let your eyes relax into soft focus (as if you're gazing at a horizon).**
- **Breathe slowly and take in everything in your field of vision without focusing on one spot.**
- **Hold this for 30-60 seconds, allowing your body to slowly disengage from stress mode.**

You don't need to focus harder - your brain needs space to slow down

5-4-3-2-1 GROUNDING

When your mind is racing, anxiety spikes, or you feel overwhelmed.

A simple technique to shift your focus from stress to the present moment.

Engages your senses to interrupt anxious thoughts and bring you back to reality.

- 5 - Look around and name five things you can see. Focus on details like colors, shapes, or textures.**
- 4 - Touch four things around you. Feel the texture - smooth, rough, soft, or hard.**
- 3 - Listen for three distinct sounds, whether near or far.**
- 2 - Identify two different scents in your environment.**
- 1 - Focus on one taste in your mouth or take a sip of water to ground yourself.**

You don't need to chase your thoughts - just come back to where you are

WARM CUP RESET

When feeling emotionally unsettled or anxious.

Using warmth to trigger relaxation and ease stress.

The sensation of warmth increases oxytocin, the “bonding hormone,” which promotes relaxation.

- **Hold a warm drink like tea, coffee, or warm water.**
- **Focus on the warmth in your hands and sip slowly.**
- **Inhale the aroma and take slow, deep breaths.**

Sometimes your body just needs a signal that it’s safe to relax.

When experiencing emotional overwhelm, anxiety, or distress.

A simple self-soothing technique that uses gentle tapping to calm the nervous system.

Helps lower stress hormones and helps calm your nervous system.

- **Cross your arms over your chest, placing your hands on opposite shoulders.**
- **Gently tap one shoulder, then the other, in a slow, alternating rhythm.**
- **Continue tapping for 30-60 seconds, while breathing deeply and focusing on a calming thought.**

You don't need to push the feeling away, just help your body feel safe.

DEEP BREATHING

When experiencing emotional overwhelm, anxiety, or distress.

A breathing method to reduce stress

- **Take a slow, deep inhale through your nose for 4 seconds.**
- **Hold the breath for 4 seconds.**
- **Exhale gently through your mouth for 6-8 seconds.**
- **Repeat this process**

Your breath can shift your body faster than your thoughts ever will.

TENSE AND RELAX RESET

When feeling physically tense, restless, or anxious.

A quick way to release physical stress stored in your muscles.

Sends a message to your nervous system that it's safe to relax.

- **Find a quiet spot where you can sit or lie down.**
- **Tightly clench your fists, scrunch your toes, or tense your shoulders for 5-10 seconds.**
- **Hold the tension, taking a deep breath in.**
- **Then, slowly release the tension as you exhale.**
- **Repeat 2-3 times if needed, focusing on how your muscles relax with each cycle.**

You can't always think your way out but you can release it from your body

COLD WATER RESET

When you feel overwhelmed, sluggish, or need a fast mental reset.

A quick cold exposure method to reset your nervous system.

Cold exposure activates the vagus nerve, reducing stress hormones and increasing alertness.

Options include:

- **Splash cold water on your face or run cold water over your wrists.**
- **Take a cold shower for 30 seconds.**
- **Hold an ice cube in your hand for a few seconds while breathing deeply.**

A quick physical reset can break the stress cycle faster than overthinking it.

SHAKE IT OUT RESET

When you feel restless, on edge, overwhelmed, or stuck in your body.

A quick movement technique to release built-up stress and tension in your body

Helps your body release stress energy and reset your nervous system.

- **Stand up and loosen your arms and legs**
- **Gently shake out your hands, arms, shoulders, and legs**
- **Let your body move freely- no right or wrong way**
- **Keep shaking for 30–60 seconds, breathing naturally**
- **Stop, take a breath, and notice how your body feels**

Your body isn't meant to hold stress - let it move out.

POWER POSE RESET

When you need to feel grounded and ready before any situation.

A body posture technique that boosts confidence and reduces stress.

Changes body posture to release tension and signal self-assurance.

- **Stand tall with your feet hip-width apart.**
- **Place your hands on your hips or stretch your arms above your head.**
- **Hold the pose for 1-2 minutes while breathing deeply.**

How you hold your body can change how you feel faster than you think.

Don't overthink this
Just follow these steps
in order

OVERWHELM RESCUE PLAN



USE THIS WHEN YOU FEEL OVERWHELMED

You don't need to figure anything out - just follow the steps below.

PHYSICAL RESET

INTERRUPT THE STRESS RESPONSE

Cold Water Reset – Splash cold water on your face or wrists to activate the vagus nerve and lower stress hormones.

Tense & Release Hack – Quickly relieve muscle tension by clenching and relaxing muscles.

MENTAL RESET

CALM RACING THOUGHTS

The 60-Second Overwhelm Reset – Take a deep breath and identify one small thing you CAN control.

Soft Gaze Visual Reset – Relax your eyes into a soft, unfocused gaze to disengage from stress.

GROUND & RESET

REGAIN CONTROL

5-4-3-2-1 Grounding – Use sensory focus to bring yourself back to the present.

Warm Cup Reset – Hold a warm drink to signal relaxation and safety.



STRESS HACKS

Simple ways to reduce stress without thinking about it

These are for prevention, small daily support, and making things easier

MICRO-HABIT STACKING

WHAT IT IS

A way to **sneak stress relief into things you already do.**

WHEN TO USE IT

Anytime during daily routines.

WHY IT WORKS

Makes stress relief automatic by linking it to existing habits.

HOW TO DO IT

- Pair a **deep breath** with **opening a door.**
- **Stretch** while **brushing your teeth.**
- Take **three deep breaths** before **checking emails.**

Small actions repeated daily create real change over time.

MINDFUL EATING HACK

WHAT IT IS

A technique to bring awareness to meals and reduce stress through eating habits.

WHEN TO USE IT

During meals or snacks when feeling rushed or overwhelmed.

WHY IT WORKS

Helps slow down eating, improves digestion, and fosters a sense of calm.

HOW TO DO IT

- Take a moment to observe your food—color, texture, aroma.
- Eat slowly, focusing on each bite.
- Chew thoroughly, noticing the taste and texture.
- Take deep breaths between bites.

Slowing down - even for a moment - can calm your entire system.

SENSORY RESET

WHAT IT IS

A simple way to calm your mind by using your senses to shift your focus.

WHEN TO USE IT

When you feel overwhelmed, overstimulated, or mentally drained.

WHY IT WORKS

Gives your brain something simple to focus on, helping you step out of stress mode.

HOW TO DO IT

- Step outside or move to a quieter space if possible
- Notice one thing you can see, hear, and feel
- Focus on small details (temperature, sounds, textures)
- Take a few slow breaths while doing this
- Stay here for 30–60 seconds

Sometimes a small shift in your surroundings is enough to reset how you feel.

SCROLL PAUSE RESET

WHAT IT IS

A quick pause to break the autopilot scrolling habit and reset your focus.

WHEN TO USE IT

When you catch yourself scrolling without thinking or feeling stuck on your phone.

WHY IT WORKS

Interrupts the automatic habit loop and gives your brain a chance to reset.

HOW TO DO IT

- Before opening an app, pause for 5 seconds
- Take one slow breath
- Ask yourself: “Do I actually want to be here right now?”
- Decide:
Keep scrolling (intentionally) Or put your phone down
- If you put your phone down, shift to one small action (stand up, stretch, take a breath)

You don't have to stop scrolling - you just don't have to do it on autopilot.

HOW TO TELL IF A TECHNIQUE IS WORKING FOR YOU



If you feel mentally lighter

The technique worked for cognitive stress relief.

If your jaw or shoulders relax

Your physical stress response is calming.

If you stop replaying negative thoughts

The mindset shift is working.

If you feel warmth or comfort

Your body is responding to relaxation.

- If one method doesn't feel effective, try another
- Different techniques work for different people
- Try a few and notice what actually works for you.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU STILL FEEL STRESSED

If you've tried a technique and **still** feel overwhelmed, try these steps:



Switch techniques

If you started with a cognitive technique (like grounding), try a physical one (like Tense & Release).

Stack techniques

Combine two methods, like Deep Breathing while holding a Warm Cup.

Repeat the process

Some techniques take multiple cycles before you feel the effect.

Move your body

A short walk, stretching, or shaking off tension can reset your nervous system.

SOME OF THIS TAKES A FEW TRIES. THAT'S NORMAL.

Stress relief doesn't have to be a whole thing.

Small, simple actions, done when you actually need them, can shift how your body and mind feel faster than you'd expect.

Try the techniques. Notice what works for you. Come back when you need it.

That's the whole plan.



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