

## **10 Pocket Coping Skills for Anxiety**

Quick ways to reset, ground, and feel in control

### **1. Box Breathing**

**Why it helps:** Regulates your nervous system and shifts your body out of 'fight-or-flight' mode.

**How to do it:** Inhale for 4 seconds, hold for 4, exhale for 4, hold for 4. Repeat 4-6 rounds.

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

**Why it helps:** Brings your mind back to the present using your five senses.

**How to do it:** Name 5 things you see, 4 you can touch, 3 you hear, 2 you smell, 1 you taste.

### **3. Tense & Release**

**Why it helps:** Helps you release physical tension and calm your body.

**How to do it:** Tense and relax muscle groups like fists, shoulders, or jaw for 5 seconds each.

### **4. Finger Tap Counting**

**Why it helps:** Redirects mental energy with a calming, repetitive action.

**How to do it:** Tap thumb to each finger while counting or repeating a calming phrase.

### **5. Name 3 Things You Can Control**

**Why it helps:** Shifts focus from overwhelm to empowerment.

**How to do it:** Say or write 3 small things you can control right now (e.g., breath, actions, break).

### **6. Breathe with Your Hands**

**Why it helps:** Combines deep breathing with movement to calm the nervous system.

**How to do it:** Trace your fingers while breathing in as you go up, and out as you go down.

### **7. Count Backwards by 7s**

**Why it helps:** Distracts from anxiety by engaging logical thinking.

**How to do it:** Start at 100 and count backwards by 7 for 30-60 seconds.

### **8. Cold Water Splash or Ice Hold**

**Why it helps:** Triggers the body's calming 'dive reflex.'

**How to do it:** Splash cold water on your face or hold an ice cube until it melts.

### **9. Breath Focus with a Phrase**

**Why it helps:** Reinforces calming thoughts through intentional breathing.

**How to do it:** Inhale and think 'Breathe in calm.' Exhale and think 'Breathe out fear.'

### **10. Grounding Object in Your Pocket**

**Why it helps:** Anchors you through touch and sensation.

**How to do it:** Hold and focus on the texture, shape, and temperature of a small object.

*Tip: Cut these skills into individual cards, glue or tape them to index cards, and keep them in your bag, car, or desk. When anxiety hits, pull a card at random and try that skill-you might be surprised how well it works in the moment.*