

REACTIVE STRATEGIES TO REBOOT

In order to stop and disrupt a negative cycle to calm your hijacked emotional brain, you need to employ an immediate strategy. Once you are calm, you will have access to your logical brain, and then, and only then, can you work through and process your emotions in a non-distorted way. (That worksheet is next! Here is a list of strategies that may work for you. You may have to try all of them to find one that works best. Review the list and pick one to try the next time you feel like you are about to flip your lid and see if it can help you re-engage your logical thinking. (Don't worry- we have things for you to try next)

| Strategy | Description | How to Disrupt Cycle |
|---------------------------------|--|---|
| Deep belly breathing | Slow your spiraling thoughts by doing deep belly breathing to get oxygen to all areas of your body. This is important to get oxygen to your brain and will help you calm down. Make sure they are deep and long. | Here is a link to Breathing in Thirds audio. Close your eyes and relax as you <u>follow the audio instructions to breathe long and deeply.</u> |
| Notice and Modify Action | First - notice your stress increase (your increased heart rate, palms sweating, chest tightening, rising irritability). Tell yourself that you need to pick a calming action that will help you change the spiral. | Once you have noticed that you are in a stress physical state, remind yourself to choose an action that can help you calm down: -Uncross your arms -Force yourself to unfurrow your brow -Smile, even if it feels unnatural These modifications can help your brain calm. |
| Short burst of exercise | By matching your anxiety heart rate with a physical heart rate, you will find that you can calm down more naturally - like you would after a workout. | Do 10 burpees or 20 jumping jacks or run up and down nearby stairs in your building. Once your heart rate is up, cool down. Take big deep breaths as you stretch. |
| Nature | Trees and fresh air are often a great way to calm. Getting outside even for a 5 minute break is a very effective reboot. | -Get outside for even 5 minutes -If you can't get outside, put in earbuds and listen to nature sounds -Try to be mindful of what you see and smell -Take deep breaths |
| Hot/Cold Restart | Alternating cold and hot water will reset your symptoms and distract your brain. Don't use too hot of water - it is the contrast that will disrupt the cycle. | -Splash cold water on your face -Then alternate with hot water on your face -Repeat |
| Pressure resistance for release | This alternating strategy helps you release tension quickly. | Push your palms together with intensity for 20 sec. Release and relax for 10 seconds. Repeat 3 or 4 times. |
| Music/Dance | When you notice that you are spiraling, put on a playlist that you love. | It is great if it is an upbeat song you just can't stop yourself from singing or moving to. Sing at the top of your lungs or dance around until your brain has calmed. |
| The Burrito | Use a weighted blanket if you have one or just pile on blankets. Research says that a fetal, cocooned state can help you calm your physical body, which can calm your thoughts. | Find a quiet space if you can. Wrap yourself tightly in a big heavy blanket. Dim the lights, close your eyes. Repeat a mantra of "I am okay. I am okay." |