

GARETH WRIGHT DESIGN

# THE WORKPLACE WELLNESS HANDBOOK

Addressing  
Anxiety and stress in  
the workplace

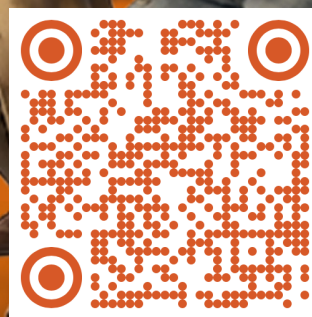
A Practical Handbook for  
Business Owners, Marketers & Creatives



LIKE A REALITY  
TV STAR A  
SMALL BUSINESS  
**NEEDS**  
ATTENTION  
TO SURVIVE.  
**WE CAN HELP**



SCAN HERE



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# Redefining the Entrepreneurial Mindset

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Being a small business owner often feels like carrying the weight of the world on your shoulders, where every decision feels monumental and every mistake feels like a catastrophe. The first step in managing anxiety is recognising that your business is what you do, not who you are. High-functioning anxiety often masquerades as ambition or perfectionism, driving you to overwork under the guise of being productive. To regain control, you must shift your perspective from a mindset of scarcity, fearing what might go wrong to one of resilience, understanding that setbacks are data points rather than personal failures.

To implement this shift, start by practising radical acceptance of the uncertainty that comes with entrepreneurship. Anxiety thrives on the need for absolute certainty, which is impossible in business. Instead of trying to predict every outcome, focus on building your capacity to handle whatever arises. This involves setting

clear boundaries between your work and personal life, such as a hard log-off time, to prevent the always-on mentality from frying your nervous system. By treating your mental health as a critical business asset rather than a luxury, you ensure the longevity of both yourself and your company.



## Tips for Mindset Shift:

- Reframe “failures” as “experiments” in your notebook to lower the emotional stakes.
- Use a dedicated work phone or SIM card to physically separate your business life from your personal time.
- Spend five minutes each morning identifying three things you can control and acknowledging what you cannot.





### Tips for System Building:

- Use the “Rule of Three”: choose only three essential tasks to complete each day to avoid a mounting sense of dread.
- Set up automated email templates for common enquiries to reduce the stress of drafting perfect responses.
- Try the Pomodoro technique. 25 minutes of work followed by a 5-minute break to prevent burnout during long sessions.

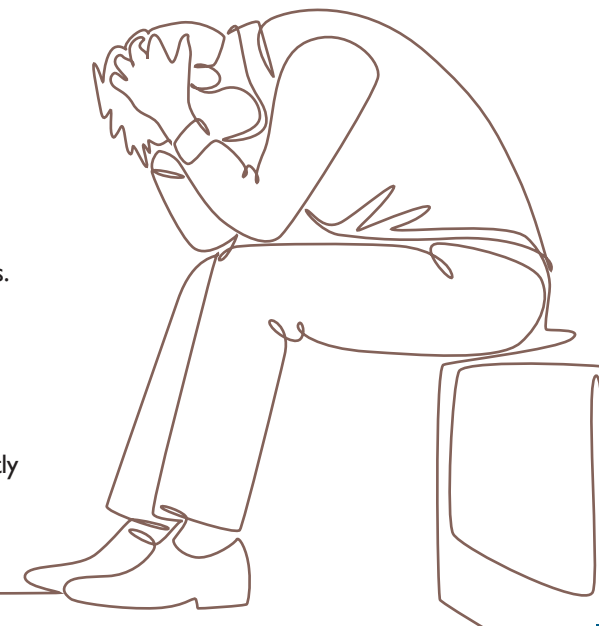
# Practical Systems to Combat Overwhelm

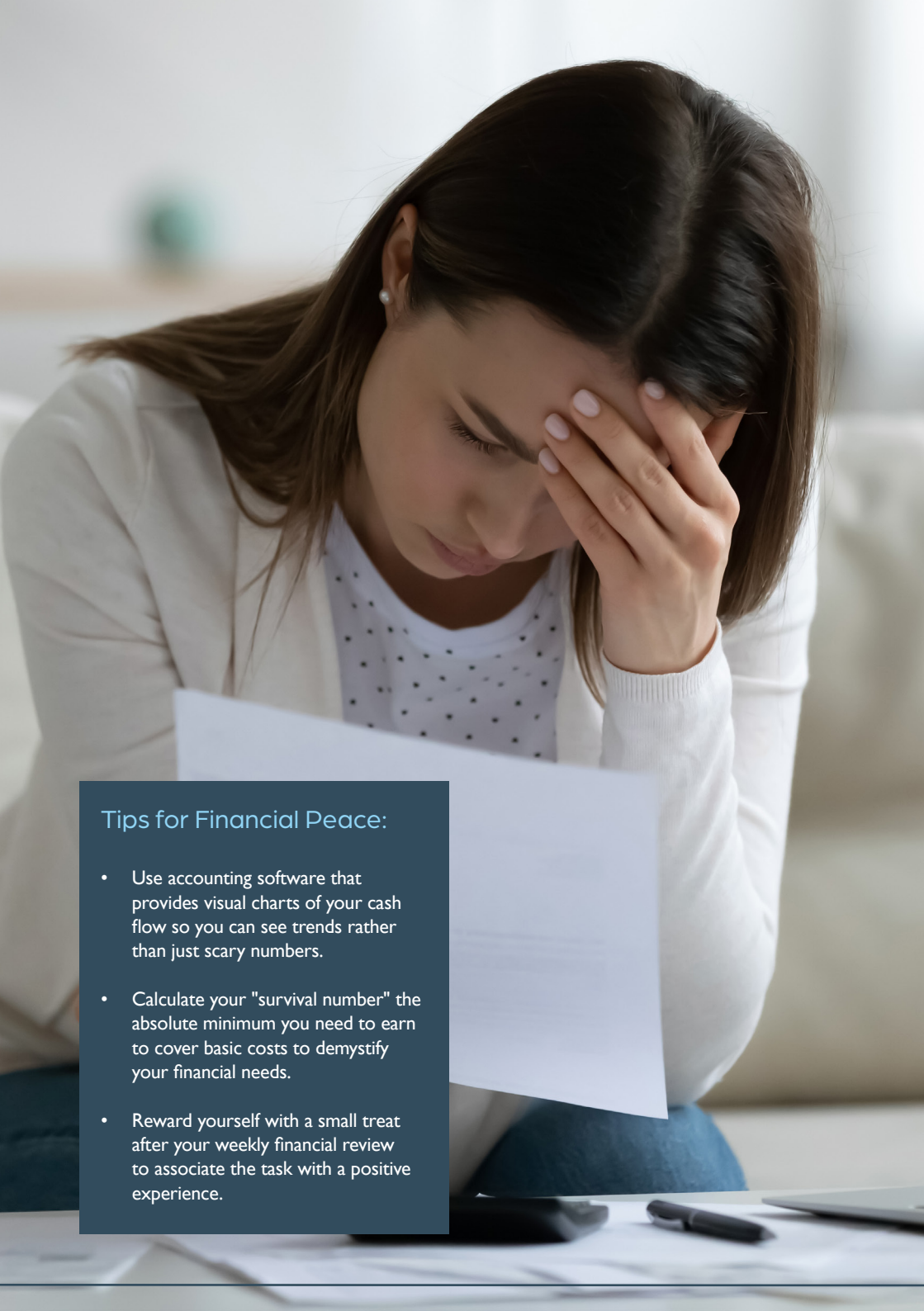
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The to-do list is often a primary source of anxiety for business owners, especially when it becomes an endless scroll of daunting tasks. When anxiety strikes, the brain’s executive function can freeze, making even simple tasks feel impossible. To counter this, you must master the art of micro-tasking. Break every large project into tiny, non-threatening steps that take no more than fifteen minutes to complete. This lowers the barrier to entry and provides a hit of dopamine with every small win, helping to bypass the freeze response and build momentum throughout the day.

Another essential system is the implementation of anxiety-informed scheduling. This means recognising your natural energy cycles and scheduling high-stress tasks, like client calls or financial reviews, during your peak hours. Conversely, use your low-energy or high-anxiety periods for administrative tasks that require less emotional labour. Automating repetitive processes such as invoicing, social media posting, or appointment booking can also significantly

reduce the number of micro-decisions you have to make daily. Reducing decision fatigue preserves your mental energy for high-level strategy and self-care.





### Tips for Financial Peace:

- Use accounting software that provides visual charts of your cash flow so you can see trends rather than just scary numbers.
- Calculate your "survival number" the absolute minimum you need to earn to cover basic costs to demystify your financial needs.
- Reward yourself with a small treat after your weekly financial review to associate the task with a positive experience.

# Managing the Financial Fear Loop

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Money is perhaps the most significant trigger for anxiety in the small business world. The fluctuations of cash flow can create a constant state of hyper-vigilance, where you are always waiting for the other shoe to drop. To break this fear loop, you need a combination of cold, hard data and emotional grounding. Avoid ostriching the tendency to ignore bank accounts when you're stressed. Instead, set a weekly Money Date where you review your numbers in a calm environment with a cup of tea. Knowing the exact reality of your finances is almost always less stressful than the monsters your imagination creates in the dark.

Furthermore, build a Peace of Mind fund that is separate from your business savings. Even if you can only contribute a tiny percentage of your revenue initially, having a dedicated cushion specifically for emergencies can quiet the what-if thoughts that keep you up at night. If financial anxiety becomes paralyzing,

consider outsourcing your bookkeeping or consulting with a financial planner. Often, having a neutral third party look at your numbers can provide the objective perspective you need to see that you are doing better than your anxiety tells you.





# Setting Boundaries with Clients and Technology

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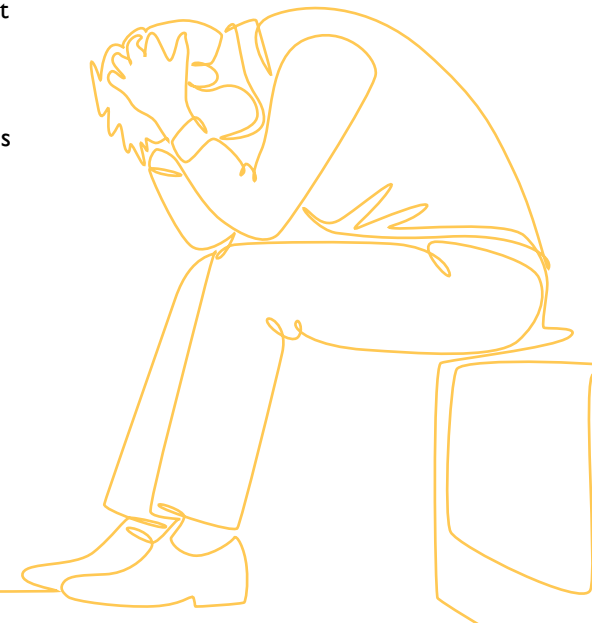
In the digital age, a small business owner is accessible 24/7, which is a recipe for chronic anxiety. The pressure to respond instantly to emails, DMs, and comments can leave you in a state of constant alertness, which mimics the body's fight-or-flight response. You must reclaim your time by setting explicit expectations with your clients from the very beginning. Use your onboarding process to communicate your working hours and expected response times. Most clients will respect these boundaries if they are clearly stated; those who don't are often the high-maintenance clients who contribute most to your stress levels anyway.

Technology should be a tool, not a tether. Use features like Do Not Disturb and app limits to create digital sanctuary spaces. Designate specific times of the day to check communications rather than reacting to every notification as it arrives. By batching your communication, you regain a sense of agency over your schedule. Additionally, learn the

power of saying no or not right now to opportunities that don't align with your core goals. Every yes to a non-essential task is a no to your mental well-being and the strategic growth of your business.

## Tips for Better Boundaries:

- Add your working hours to your email signature so clients know when not to expect a reply.
- Disable push notifications for all social media and email apps on your personal phone.
- Draft an "Onboarding PDF" for new clients that outlines exactly how and when you communicate.





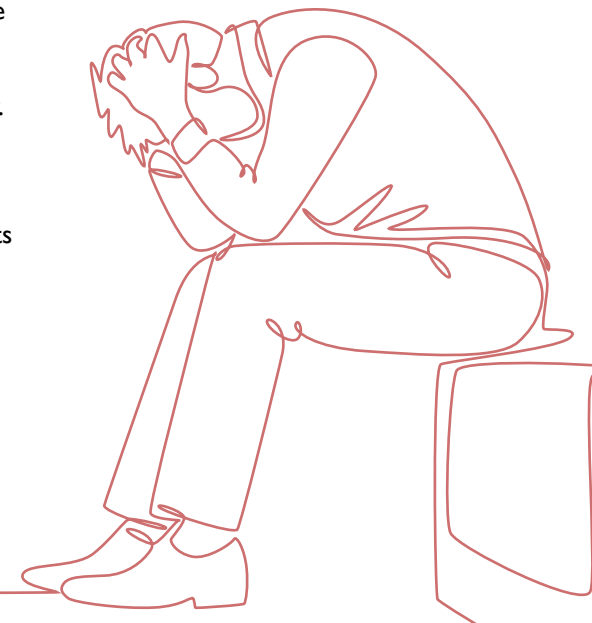
# Building a Support Ecosystem

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Entrepreneurship can be incredibly isolating, and isolation is fuel for anxiety. When you are alone with your thoughts, your inner critic becomes the loudest voice in the room. To combat this, you must actively build a support ecosystem that includes peers, mentors, and professional mental health resources. Join a community of fellow small business owners where you can speak openly about the struggles of running a company. Realising that your peers share the same fears and imposter syndrome moments can be incredibly validating and reduces the shame often associated with anxiety.

Finally, remember that professional help is a business investment. Working with a therapist or a coach who specialises in high-pressure environments can provide you with a toolkit of cognitive-behavioural techniques to manage physical symptoms of anxiety. Incorporate grounding rituals into your workday such as a five-minute walk without your phone or a deep-breathing exercise before a big meeting.

By prioritising your internal world as much as your external output, you move away from a model of hustle culture and toward a sustainable, thriving business led by a calm and centred leader.



## Tips for Support:

- Find a “business buddy” for a weekly 15-minute coffee chat to offload frustrations and celebrate wins.
- Use a “Done List” at the end of the day to remind yourself of everything you achieved, rather than just what’s left to do.
- Schedule regular “mental health days” in your calendar just as you would a client meeting.



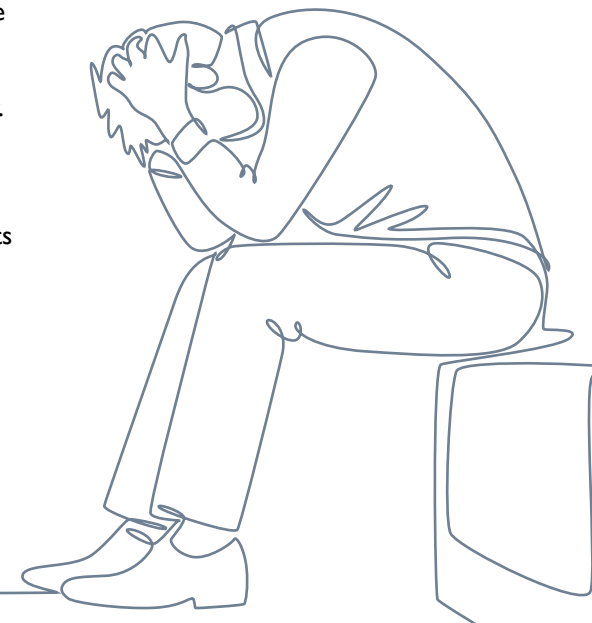
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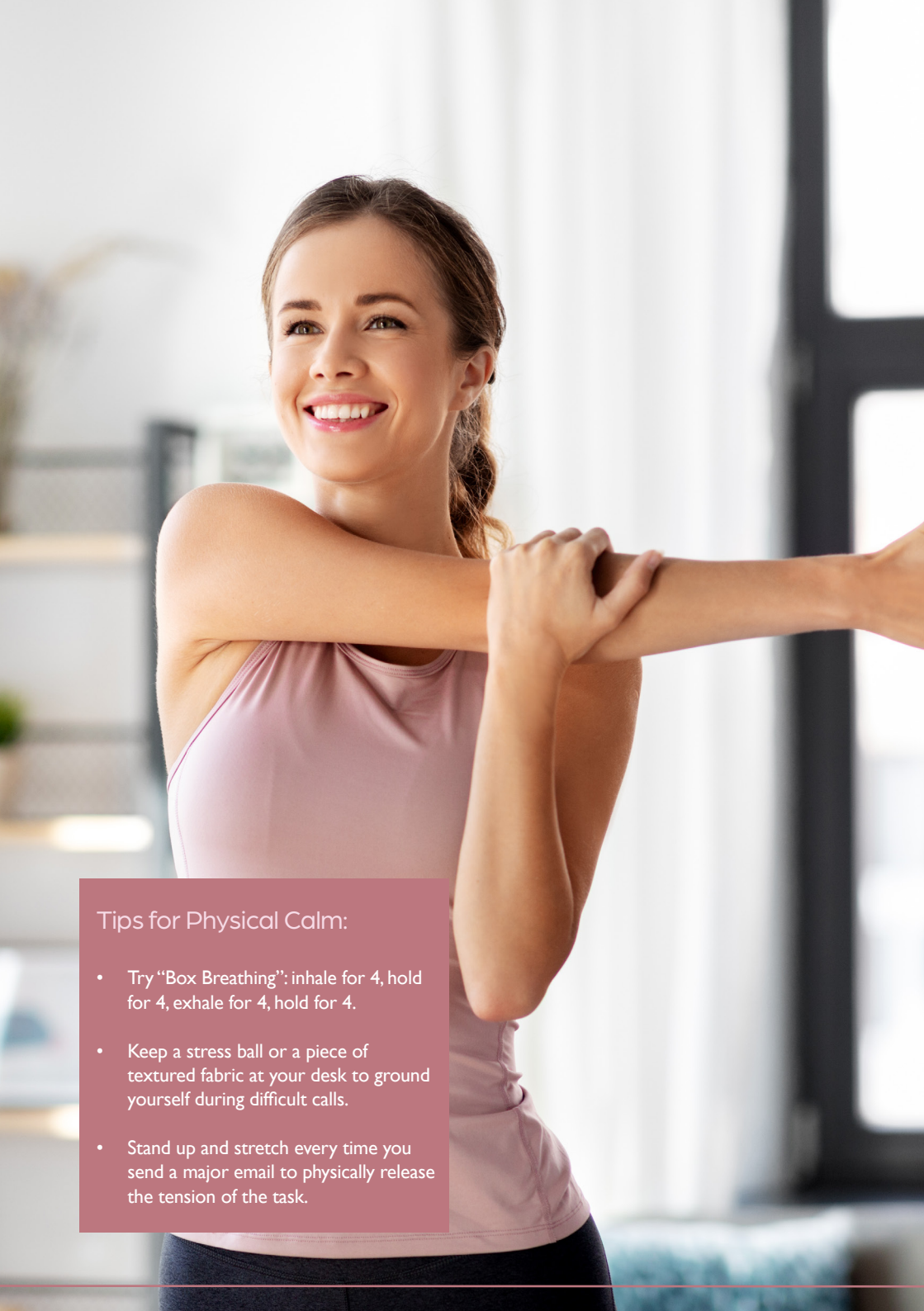
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## Tips for Ending Comparison:

- Limit your “competitor research” to just 30 minutes once a month to avoid obsessive scrolling.
- Create a “Brag Sheet” listing your unique strengths that no one else in your industry possesses.
- Remind yourself that social media metrics are “vanity metrics” and do not reflect the actual health of a business.



# The Physical Connection

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**A**nxiety is not just a mental state; it is a physiological one. When you are stressed about a deadline or a difficult client, your body stores that tension in your shoulders, neck, and gut. As a business owner, it's easy to neglect your physical needs in favour of getting one more thing done, but a sedentary lifestyle at a desk only traps the cortisol in your system. You must find ways to complete the stress cycle through physical movement. This doesn't necessarily mean a grueling workout; even ten minutes of stretching, a quick walk around the block, or shaking out your limbs can signal to your nervous system that the perceived threat has passed and it is safe to relax.

essential oils like lavender or peppermint to anchor yourself in the present moment. By treating your body as the engine of your business, you realise that proper fuelling—through hydration, nutritious food, and movement—is a non-negotiable part of your professional strategy.

Incorporate sensory resets into your workspace to help manage the physical symptoms of a looming panic attack or high-anxiety moment. This could involve keeping a cold bottle of water nearby (drinking cold water can stimulate the vagus nerve), using a weighted lap blanket during admin work, or using



- Tips for Physical Calm:
- Try "Box Breathing": inhale for 4, hold for 4, exhale for 4, hold for 4.
  - Keep a stress ball or a piece of textured fabric at your desk to ground yourself during difficult calls.
  - Stand up and stretch every time you send a major email to physically release the tension of the task.

## Your Quick-Relief Cheat Sheet

Keep this page handy for those moments when things feel a bit too much. These two exercises are designed to bring you back to the present and release physical tension.

### The 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Tool

**When to use:** When your mind is racing, or you feel a sense of panic whilst out and about (e.g., on the bus or in a queue).

#### The Method:

Take a slow breath and acknowledge:

- **5 things you can SEE:**  
A bird on a wire, a red car, a crack in the pavement, a tree, a shop sign.
- **4 things you can TOUCH:**  
The texture of your denim jeans, the cool metal of your keys, the weight of your bag, your hair.
- **3 things you can HEAR:**  
Distant traffic, the hum of a fridge, someone talking in the distance.
- **2 things you can SMELL:**  
Freshly cut grass, your laundry detergent, or a nearby café.
- **1 thing you can TASTE:**  
The lingering hint of your morning tea or a mint.

### The “Tense & Release” (PMR)

**When to use:** When your body feels “wound up,” or you have a tight chest and aching shoulders.

#### The Method:

Starting from your toes and working up, tense each muscle group for 5 seconds, then let go instantly. Feel the “heaviness” as the muscle relaxes.

1. **Feet:** Curl your toes tightly... and release.
2. **Calves:** Point your toes toward your shins... and release.
3. **Stomach:** Clench your abdominal muscles... and release.
4. **Hands:** Make tight fists... and release.
5. **Shoulders:** Shrug them up to your ears... and release.
6. **Face:** Scrunch your eyes and jaw... and release.

#### Top Tip: The “Golden Thread” Breath

If you only have thirty seconds, try this: Inhale through your nose, then exhale through pursed lips as if you are breathing out a long, thin golden thread. Make the exhale twice as long as the inhale.





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