

Managing the Moment and then dealing with the problem.

The goal is not to analyse or make decisions, but to help your nervous system settle.

First Reminder (Read This First)

These sensations are uncomfortable but not dangerous.

- This will pass.
- Focus only on calming your body right now.
- Avoid big decisions or problem-solving until you feel more settled.

What Fight, Flight and Freeze Can Feel Like (And Why It's Still Safe)

Panic and Dissociation can feel like:

- Shaking, trembling, or a rush of adrenaline
- Fast heartbeat, chest tightness, hot/cold flashes
- Dizziness, nausea, or feeling "floaty"
- Tingling, numbness, or feeling unreal / detached
- A strong urge to escape, fix, or get reassurance

Why it's still safe: These are common body sensations caused by adrenaline and stress hormones. They are uncomfortable, but they pass and they cannot harm you.

Panic feels dangerous, but it cannot harm you. Dissociation can feel unsettling, but it doesn't mean you are "crazy" or "losing touch with reality". Panic is your body's **false alarm system** switching on. Dissociation is the way your mind and body react to a prolonged false alarm. The sensations are intense, but they are temporary and safe.

What you are practising

- **Staying with the sensations** without fighting them
- **Letting the wave pass** while you support your body
- **Proving to your brain** (over time) that you are safe and are not in danger

Temperature Reset (Fast-Acting)

Changing temperature can interrupt the body's false alarm system.

Choose ONE option:

- Splash very cold water on your face
- Submerge your face in cold water for 30 seconds
- Hold a cold pack or ice (wrapped in cloth)
- Take a warm shower
- Wrap up in a blanket or use a hot water bottle

Why this helps: Adrenaline can cause shaking. Temperature changes help signal safety to the nervous system.

► Optional video: <https://youtu.be/8nVady7A3Qo>

Self-Compassion & Safe Imagery

When possible, add comfort.

- Listen to a gentle guided mindfulness practice that helps you feel a bit safer
- Imagine yourself in a safe, calm place

Goal: Reconnect with a felt sense of safety, not perfect calm.

Optional recording: <https://youtu.be/s0brEfm2wtk>

5-4-3-2-1 Grounding

Bring attention back to the present moment.

Name:

- 5 things you can see
- 4 things you can feel
- 3 things you can hear
- 2 things you can smell
- 1 thing you can taste

► Optional video: <https://youtu.be/30VMIEmA114>

Body Awareness (Step-by-Step)

Move slowly. Notice sensations.

1. Take 5 slow breaths in through your nose, out through puckered lips
2. Feet flat on the floor – wiggle toes, curl and uncurl
3. Stomp feet several times; notice contact with the ground
4. Clench fists → release (repeat 10 times)
5. Press palms together firmly for 15 seconds
6. Rub palms together; notice warmth and sound
7. Stretch arms overhead for 5 seconds, then relax
8. Take 5 more deep breaths

Notice: Any shift toward calm, heaviness, or steadiness counts.

Important

When you are distressed, your brain temporarily loses access to clear thinking.

This is **not** the time to:

- Analyse what's happening
- Make decisions
- Judge yourself

Your **only task** right now is regulation.

Regulation takes time. You can expect this to take **at least 15 minutes**.

Speak to yourself **gently and reassuringly**. Harsh or self-critical thoughts can re-trigger the false alarm system, because the nervous system is very sensitive to attacks — **even internal ones**.

Supportive encouragement helps your body feel safe enough to settle.

This is a false alarm and it does not make you a weak person to have false alarms.

Baseline Care Matters

Sensitive nervous systems are more vulnerable without basics.

- This will pass.
- Focus only on calming your body right now.
- Avoid big decisions or problem-solving until you feel more settled.

Check-in:

- Have I eaten recently?
- Have I slept enough?
- Have I moved my body?
- Have I had any positive or soothing experiences?

What Is My Baseline?

My baseline is how okay my body and brain feel on a normal day, before stress happens.

It's my starting level.

Why Baseline Matters

- A higher baseline = stress feels easier to handle
- A lower baseline = small things can feel big very fast

If I'm struggling, it doesn't mean I'm weak. It often means my baseline is low.

What Raises My Baseline

(Check what helps you)

- Eating regular meals
- Enough sleep
- Moving my body
- Breaks and rest
- Fun or calm activities
- Feeling safe and supported

What Lowers My Baseline

- Skipping meals
- Poor sleep
- Too much stress or pressure
- No downtime
- Too much screen time
- Feeling alone or unsafe
- Substances

Quick Baseline Scale

Right now, my baseline is:

1 ————— 5 ————— 10

Very low Okay Strong

Important Reminder

Big feelings don't always mean something is wrong. Sometimes my baseline just needs support.

First help the body — then deal with the problem.

Problem Solving

Leave it to 'thinking time'. Problem-solving takes energy and concentration, and isn't something that can be done on the run. You will need to give it the time and attention it deserves to gain the most benefit. Your 'thinking time' as part of worry postponement is a great time to do it. • One by one. Make sure you deal with one problem at a time. Don't try to find solutions to everything all at once, as the quality of your solutions will suffer. To help you with this, stick to your 'thinking time' limit. If there is more to be done, you can always revisit it the next day. • Use paper. Finally, make sure you tackle a problem on paper, that is, write it down. Don't try and solve problems in your head. You will find that things get too cluttered when you try to hold a number of things in your head at one time. Many things will become clearer when putting pen to paper.

Step 1: Identify/Define Problem

Try to state the problem as clearly as possible. Be objective and specific about the behaviour, situation, timing, and circumstances that make it a problem. Describe the problem in terms of what you can observe rather than subjective feelings.

Step 2: Generate Possible Solutions/Options

List all the possible solutions. Be creative and forget about the quality of the solutions. If you allow yourself to be creative, you may come up with some options that you would not otherwise have thought of.

List All Possible Solutions

Now eliminate the less desirable or unreasonable alternatives only after as many possible solutions have been listed. Then, list the remaining options in order of preference.

Step 3: Evaluate Alternatives

Evaluate the top 3 or 4 plans in terms of their advantages and disadvantages

Step 4: Decide On A Plan

Decide on one, two or more of the plans. Specify who will take action, when the plan will be implemented and how the plan will be implemented.

Step 5: Implement Plan

Implement your plan as specified above.

Evaluate how effective the plan was. Decide whether the existing plan needs to be revised, or whether a new plan is needed to better address the problem. If you are not pleased with the outcome, return to Step 2 to select a new option or revise the existing plan, and repeat the remaining steps.

Step 6: Evaluate the Outcome

Remember, this problem-solving strategy needs some practice, but it can help you deal with difficult situations. So next time you find yourself worrying about a real problem that is in the here-and-now and you have some control over, instead of worrying about it immediately, why not first postpone it and then sit down with a piece of paper and try problem-solving during your thinking time? It is more productive than worrying, it will reduce your anxiety, and by the end of it you should have a plan of action. On the next page is a problem-solving worksheet for you to work through the 6 steps. Try it out and see how you go.