



Five Senses Mindfulness Practice

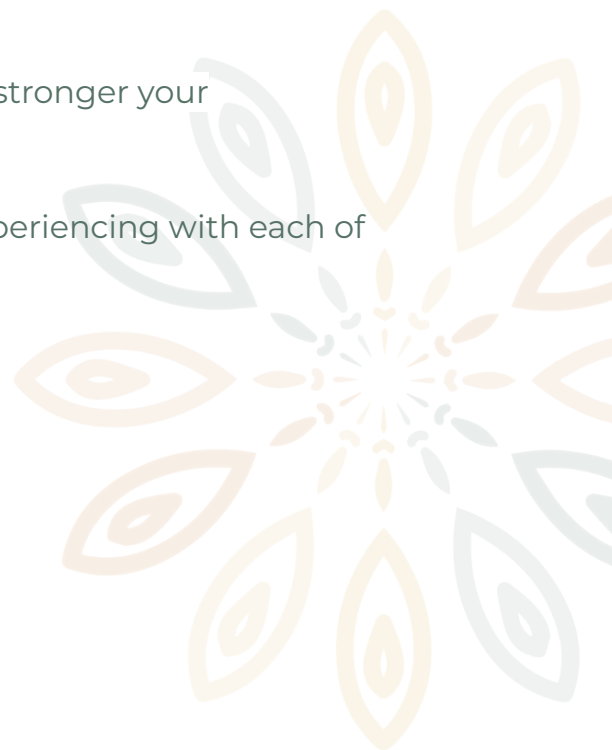
As a family caregiver, at times your life can feel stressful, and often difficult decisions are made under pressure. This can trigger your sympathetic nervous system, resulting in a fight, flight, or freeze response.

To bring balance to your nervous system, you can engage in activities that purposefully trigger your parasympathetic nervous system. This results in a rest and digest response, creating a calm feeling in the body as well as clearer thinking and decision making.

One way to achieve this is by intentionally grounding your body in your senses. The Five Senses Mindfulness Practice can help calm your nervous system, train your attention, AND can be done anytime, anywhere in just a few moments.

Added bonus...the more frequently you do this, the stronger your parasympathetic response will be!

All that is needed is to notice something you are experiencing with each of the five senses.



Here are the steps:

- Notice five things you see.

Look around you and bring your attention to five things you can see. Pick something you don't normally notice, like a shadow or a small crack in the concrete.

- Notice four things you hear.

Take a moment to listen and note four things you hear. Perhaps you can hear the chirp of a bird, the hum of the refrigerator, or the faint sounds of traffic from a nearby road.

- Notice three things you feel.

Bring awareness to three things you are currently feeling, like the texture of your clothes, the temperature of the air on your skin, or perhaps the smooth surface of a table you are resting your hands on.

- Notice two things you smell.

Breathe in through your nose and bring your awareness to scents you smell. Perhaps you notice something you usually filter out, whether they're pleasant or unpleasant.

- Notice one thing you taste.

Focus on one thing you can taste right now, at this moment. Perhaps you have a taste leftover from a snack or a drink. Or, you might have something nearby you can take a sip or bite of.

As you notice these things, you might become aware of your body becoming more grounded in the present moment. This is valuable because in order for our bodies to feel safe and for our minds to relax, we need to send the message that we are safe. By grounding yourself in your senses, you send a message to your body and brain that you are safe in this moment, and therefore the body gives itself permission to relax!

Keep in mind:

If you are unable to achieve any of these steps, it's ok. The simple act of searching for the items achieves the goal of becoming present with your senses.

The 5 Senses Mindfulness Practice can bring you to a mindful state quickly. If you only have a moment or two, consider focusing on a single sense in that time.



Document created by Katie Fleetwood, team member for Breathing Spaces Support Network for Caregivers. As a children's mindfulness coach, meditation and mindfulness instructor, and mindfulness @ work trainer, Katie feels deep gratitude for the opportunity to share tools and techniques that create space and bring peace into people's lives. Katie offers sessions for individual clients as well as groups and organizations through her business Inhale Exhale Connect, and serves as a proud collaborator with the Breathing Spaces Team, bringing peace and well-being to family and professional caregivers.