

The 5-Minute Return Practice

A short, repeatable grounding sequence for the middle of a difficult day. Longer than the Emergency Calm Button, shorter than a full reset. Designed to fit into a real life, between meetings, in the car, at the kitchen sink.

When this might help:

- You've been spiralling for a while and want a fuller reset
- You're transitioning between contexts (work to home, alone to with people)
- You need more than a breath but less than a retreat

The practice:

Set a timer for five minutes. Then:

- **Minute 1. Arrive.** Notice five things you can see, four you can hear, three you can feel, two you can smell, one you can taste. (If senses are limited, just count what's available.)
- **Minute 2. Breathe.** Box breathing: in for 4, hold for 4, out for 4, hold for 4. Repeat.
- **Minute 3. Soften.** Slow scan from head to feet. Wherever you find tension, let it go by 10%. Not all the way. Just 10%.
- **Minute 4. Locate.** Ask: *Where am I? What time is it? What was I doing before this?* Reorient.
- **Minute 5. Decide.** Ask: *What's one small thing I want to do next?* Not the whole day. Just the next thing.

The five minutes are not the goal. The return is the goal. Some days you'll need only two of these. Some days you'll do the whole thing twice.