

Five minutes back into the body.

For the moments the mind runs ahead of you. Nothing to get right — your body sets the pace, and we go slow here. Each step tells your body, in its own language, that it is safe to relax — and the nervous system shifts to match.

01 Arrive where you are.

Let your eyes move slowly around the room and land on three things you can see. Name them quietly.

The science — this is the orienting response. By tuning into the present moment, you tell the amygdala, the brain's smoke detector, that there is no fire here. The alarm begins to quiet on its own.

02 Feel what is holding you.

Notice the chair beneath you, the floor under your feet, the clothes on your shoulders. Let the weight of your body be carried for a moment. You do not have to hold yourself up right now.

The science — your nervous system reads weight and support as evidence of safety (researchers call this neuroception). Feeling held shifts you toward the parasympathetic state: rest, digest, settle.

03 Let the exhale finish.

Breathe in normally. Then let the breath out slowly, all the way to the quiet at the end — a beat longer than feels usual. Three times.

The science — the exhale is governed by the vagus nerve, and the heart literally slows a little on every out-breath. A longer exhale presses the body's own brake pedal.

04 Soften one place.

Find one place that is holding — the jaw, the shoulders, the hands. Invite it to soften by half. Not all the way. Half is enough, and half is believable.

The science — braced muscles are part of the threat loop. Releasing even half sends the brain an updated report: we are no longer bracing. The feeling of safety follows the body, not the other way around.

05 Return at your own pace.

Notice one thing that feels even slightly more settled than five minutes ago. However small, let it count.

The science — the nervous system rewires through experiences it believes. Letting a small shift register for even ten seconds helps encode it. This is neuroplasticity, working in your favor.

This is a companion between moments, not therapy — and it is yours to keep. If what you are carrying feels bigger than a page like this, that is worth honoring with real support. *Come home to yourself.*