

Panic Attack

Cheat Sheet



What to do while it's happening. Read slowly, one line at a time - you only need the next step, not all five.

1 Name what this is

Say it, out loud if you can: "This is a panic attack. It is horrible, and it is not dangerous." Naming it stops the "what is happening to me?" spiral that feeds the panic.



2 Breathe out longer than in

In through your nose for about 4 counts, out through pursed lips for 6 to 8. Don't gulp air in - the long, slow exhale is the brake pedal.



3 Plant yourself

Press your feet into the floor. Find 5 things you can see, 4 you can touch, 3 you can hear. Give your attention to your senses instead of the story.



4 Put cold on your face

Cold water, a cold can, or cold air on your cheeks and eyes. It triggers a reflex that slows a racing heart within seconds.



5 Stay until the wave drops

Panic usually peaks within about 10 minutes, then falls on its own. If you can safely stay where you are, stay - every wave you ride out teaches your brain there was no danger.



FACT 1

A panic attack cannot stop a healthy heart. It is adrenaline, not damage.

FACT 2

You are very unlikely to faint. Panic raises blood pressure - fainting needs it to drop.

FACT 3

Every panic attack in history has ended. This one will too.

WALLET CARD • CUT ALONG THE DASHED LINE

Panic Plan

- 1 This has a name: panic. It peaks, then it passes.
- 2 Exhale longer than you inhale. Repeat.
- 3 Feet down. Find 5 things you can see.
- 4 Cold on the face. Stay until the wave drops.

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Keep it where panic finds you - wallet, phone case, desk drawer.
In the moment, nobody remembers instructions. Reading beats remembering.