

What is Derealization?

Derealization is an uncomfortable mental state where your external surroundings feel fake, dreamlike, foggy, or artificial. It is a protective brain mechanism often triggered by extreme stress, anxiety, or trauma. While the world feels distorted, you remain aware that these sensations are just a trick of your mind and not actual reality.

Simple Grounding Tools to Return to Reality

When an episode strikes, these physical and mental exercises help safely anchor your mind back to your physical body:

- **The 5-4-3-2-1 Sensory Countdown:** Force your brain to process literal data from your immediate environment. Name **5** things you can see, **4** things you can physically touch, **3** distinct sounds you can hear, **2** things you can smell, and **1** thing you can taste.
- **Temperature Shock:** Splash ice-cold water onto your face or tightly grip an ice cube in your palm. The sudden sensory intensity forces your nervous system to focus on immediate physical reality.
- **Physical Touch Anchoring:** Rub your feet firmly against the floor or slowly trace the texture of a nearby object (like wood grain, fabric, or a cold metal zipper) while focusing entirely on how it feels.
- **Objective Fact Mantra:** Say your current reality facts out loud to break internal panic loops. For example: "My name is [Name]. I am sitting in my room. The year is 2026. I am physically safe."

Medical Disclaimer

The information provided above is for educational purposes and is not a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Please always consult with a qualified healthcare provider regarding a medical or mental health condition.