

Strategy #14: Pictures on the Wall Exercise

When you are feeling stress, your thoughts may be rapid and scattered. Perhaps your mind is jumping from one thing to another or replaying an event/conversation over and over again. The Pictures on the Wall Exercise will bring your focus to the present moment as you use your sense of vision to focus on something neutral.

Practice the strategy for one round. If you find your mind jumping back to the stressful thoughts, repeat the practice as needed.

How to practice this strategy

- Pick an object you can see, such as a picture on the wall or something on a table, and describe the object's shape, size, and color.

Example:

The picture is 18 inches tall by 6 inches wide. It is rectangular. It has a black frame with a white border. Inside the frame, I can see blue, purple, silver, and gray.

- Do this for two other pictures or objects — three objects in total.
- If you notice your mind wandering to stories or other thoughts about the objects, gently bring your focus back to shape, size, and color.

Begin this practice as soon as you notice your stress warning signs.