



ART THERAPY FOR ANXIETY

Create Your Way to Calm. No Talent Required.

Art activates the parasympathetic nervous system — the science of creative calm.

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QUICK CALM TECHNIQUES

- ◆ 4-7-8 Breathe + Scribble: Inhale while drawing up strokes, hold, exhale drawing down strokes — repeat 4 times
- ◆ Color by emotion: Pick 3 colors that match how you feel. Fill a page with them — no rules, just color
- ◆ Pattern drawing: Dots, squares, spirals — repetition soothes the nervous system
- ◆ Free doodle for 5 minutes: No plan, no goal, just movement on paper
- ◆ Rip and collage: Tear magazine pages. Arrange by feel, not logic. Glue when it feels right.

2

30-DAY CALMING ART PLAN

- ◆ Week 1: One line drawing per day — 5 minutes, continuous line, no lifting the pen
- ◆ Week 2: Zentangle-style patterns — small, repetitive, meditative shapes
- ◆ Week 3: Watercolor wash — one emotion per color, let it spread and blend on its own
- ◆ Week 4: Mixed media — combine Week 1-3 techniques into one expressive piece
- ◆ Daily: Journal 1 sentence after each session: 'After creating, I feel ____'

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WHY ART CALMS ANXIETY

- ◆ Art-making lowers cortisol (stress hormone) by up to 75%
- ◆ Bilateral hand movements (drawing) activate both brain hemispheres
- ◆ Flow state during creation suppresses the default mode network (the brain's rumination center)
- ◆ Making visible what's invisible reduces the power of unspoken emotions
- ◆ Physical act of mark-making is grounding — anchors you in the present moment

PRO TIP: Don't judge the art. The VALUE is in the process, not the product. A 'bad' drawing that calmed your nervous system is a perfect drawing.