

Grounding Techniques for Busy Shifts

Fact Sheet #4

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 Back of House, Front of Mind Podcast

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Grounding techniques help hospitality staff stay calm, focused, and steady during high-pressure or fast-paced shifts.

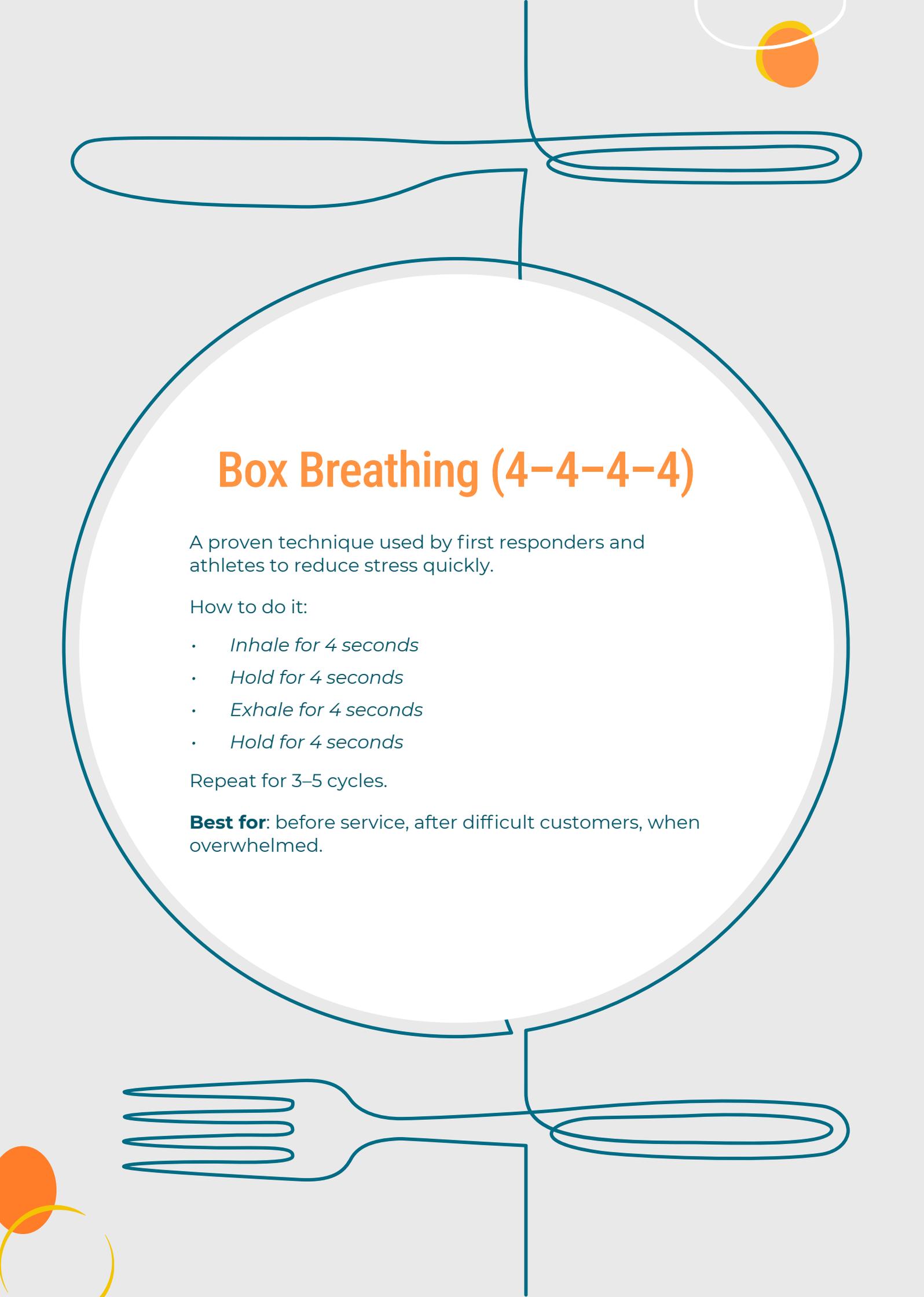
These tools support emotional regulation, reduce stress, and help prevent overwhelm in moments of customer intensity, fatigue, or heat-of-service pressure.

Why Grounding Matters in Hospitality

- Helps staff manage customer stress and emotional labour
- Reduces risk of conflict or emotional overload
- Improves focus, safety and communication
- Supports recovery after a difficult interaction
- Promotes emotional stability throughout long or busy shifts

Key Grounding Techniques for Staff

- Box Breathing (4-4-4-4)
- 5-4-3-2-1 Sensory Reset
- Feet + Breath Anchor
- 10-Second Tension Release
- Cold Water Reset
- Micro-Break Exhale



Box Breathing (4-4-4-4)

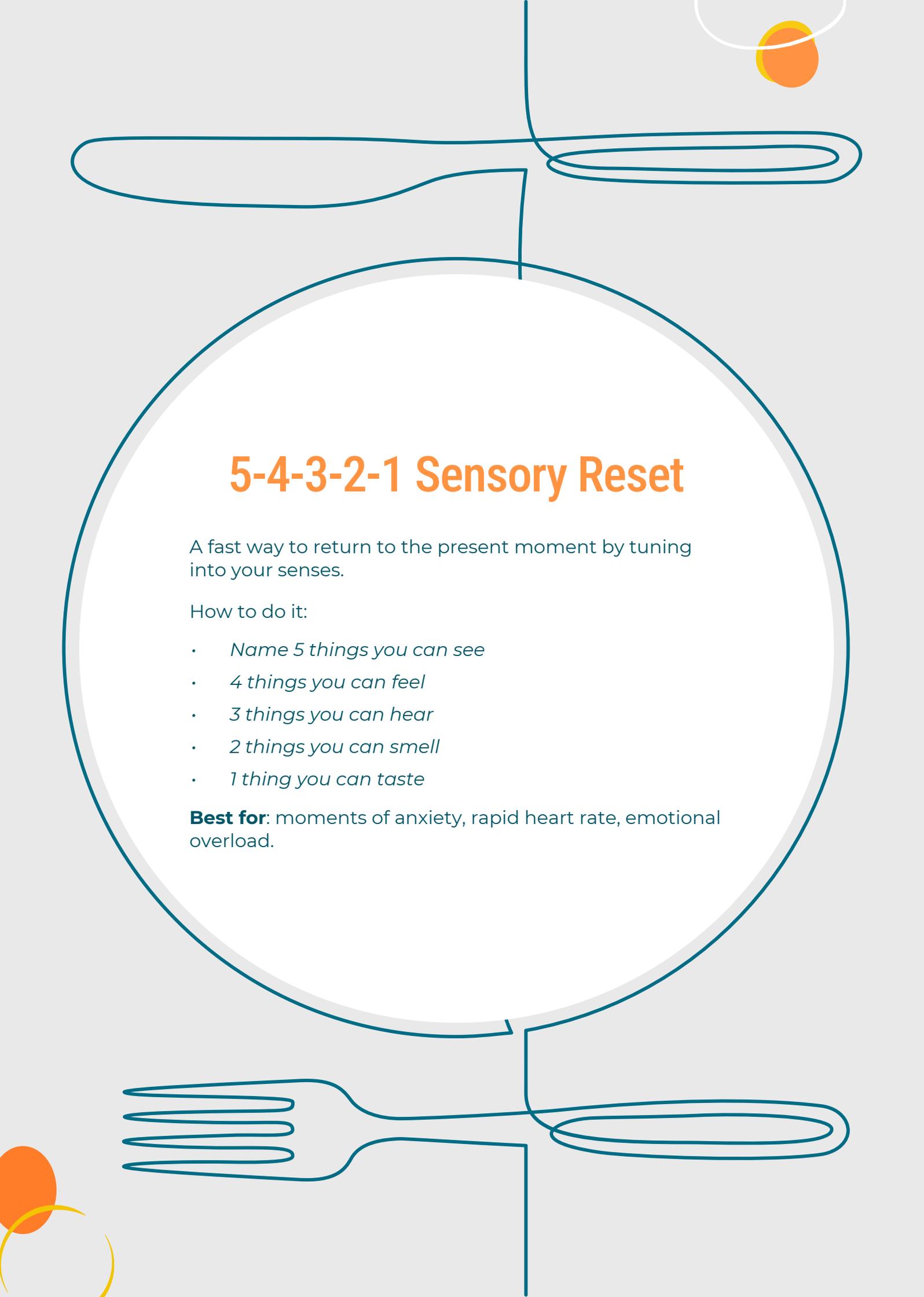
A proven technique used by first responders and athletes to reduce stress quickly.

How to do it:

- *Inhale for 4 seconds*
- *Hold for 4 seconds*
- *Exhale for 4 seconds*
- *Hold for 4 seconds*

Repeat for 3-5 cycles.

Best for: before service, after difficult customers, when overwhelmed.



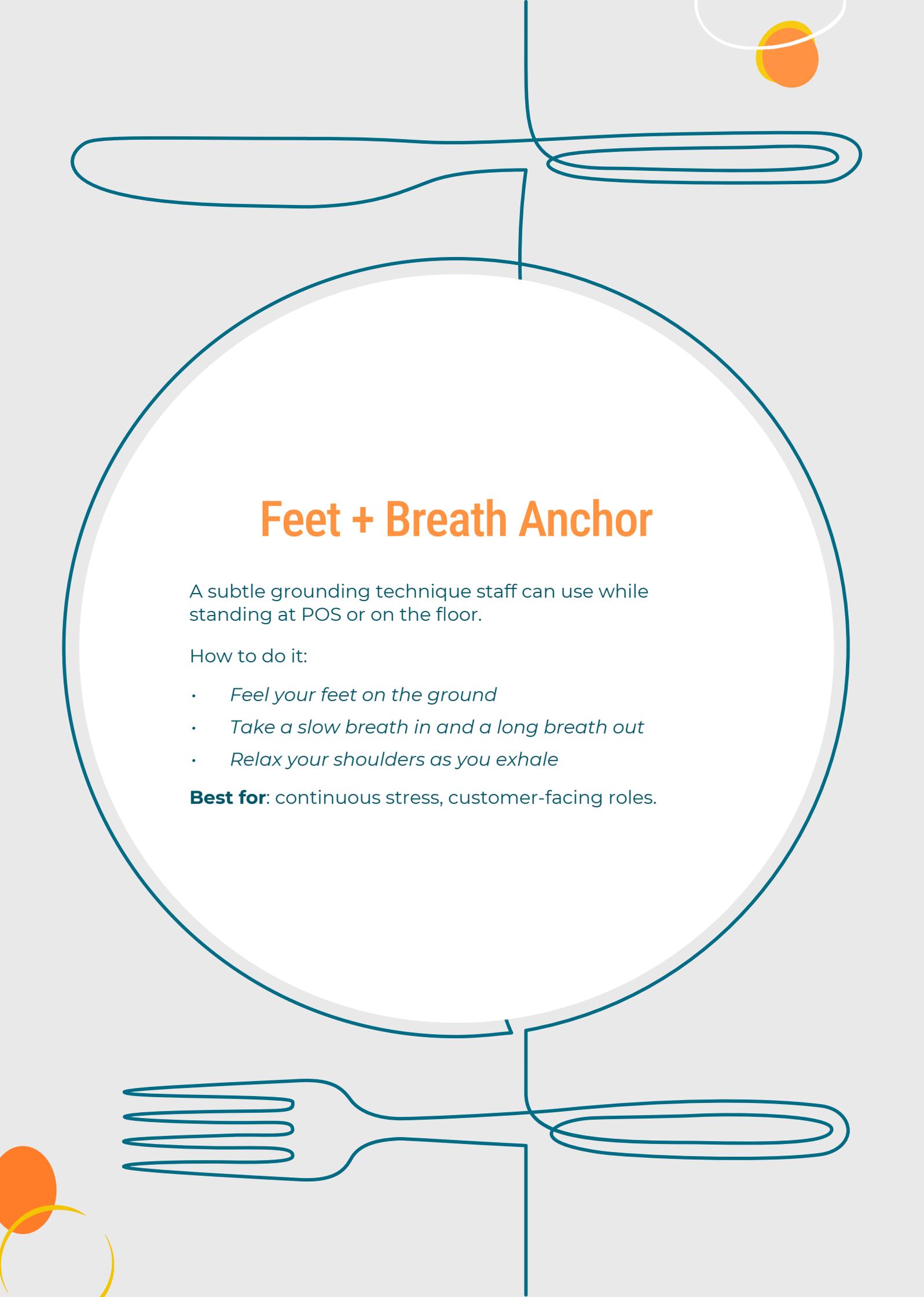
5-4-3-2-1 Sensory Reset

A fast way to return to the present moment by tuning into your senses.

How to do it:

- *Name 5 things you can see*
- *4 things you can feel*
- *3 things you can hear*
- *2 things you can smell*
- *1 thing you can taste*

Best for: moments of anxiety, rapid heart rate, emotional overload.



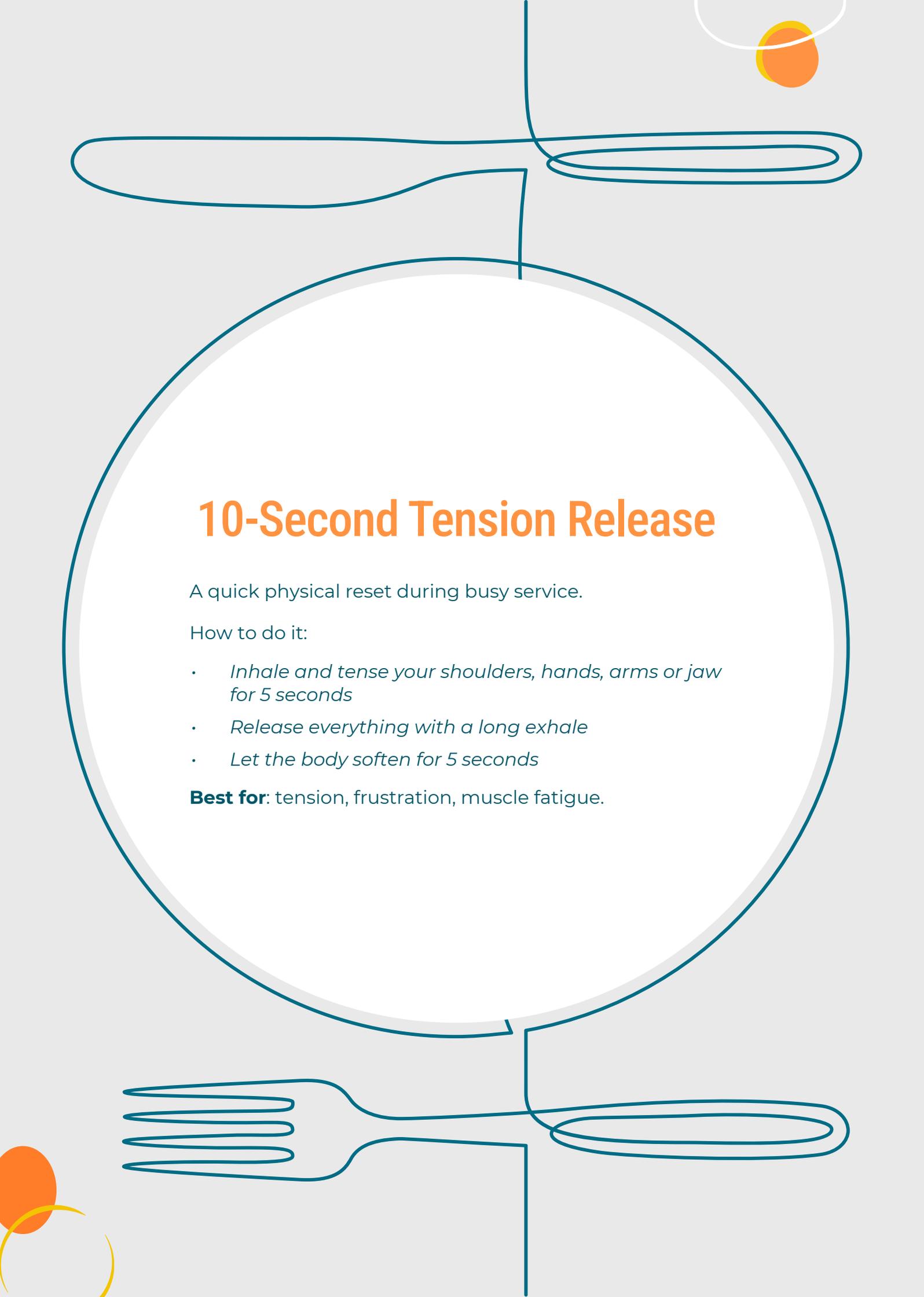
Feet + Breath Anchor

A subtle grounding technique staff can use while standing at POS or on the floor.

How to do it:

- *Feel your feet on the ground*
- *Take a slow breath in and a long breath out*
- *Relax your shoulders as you exhale*

Best for: continuous stress, customer-facing roles.



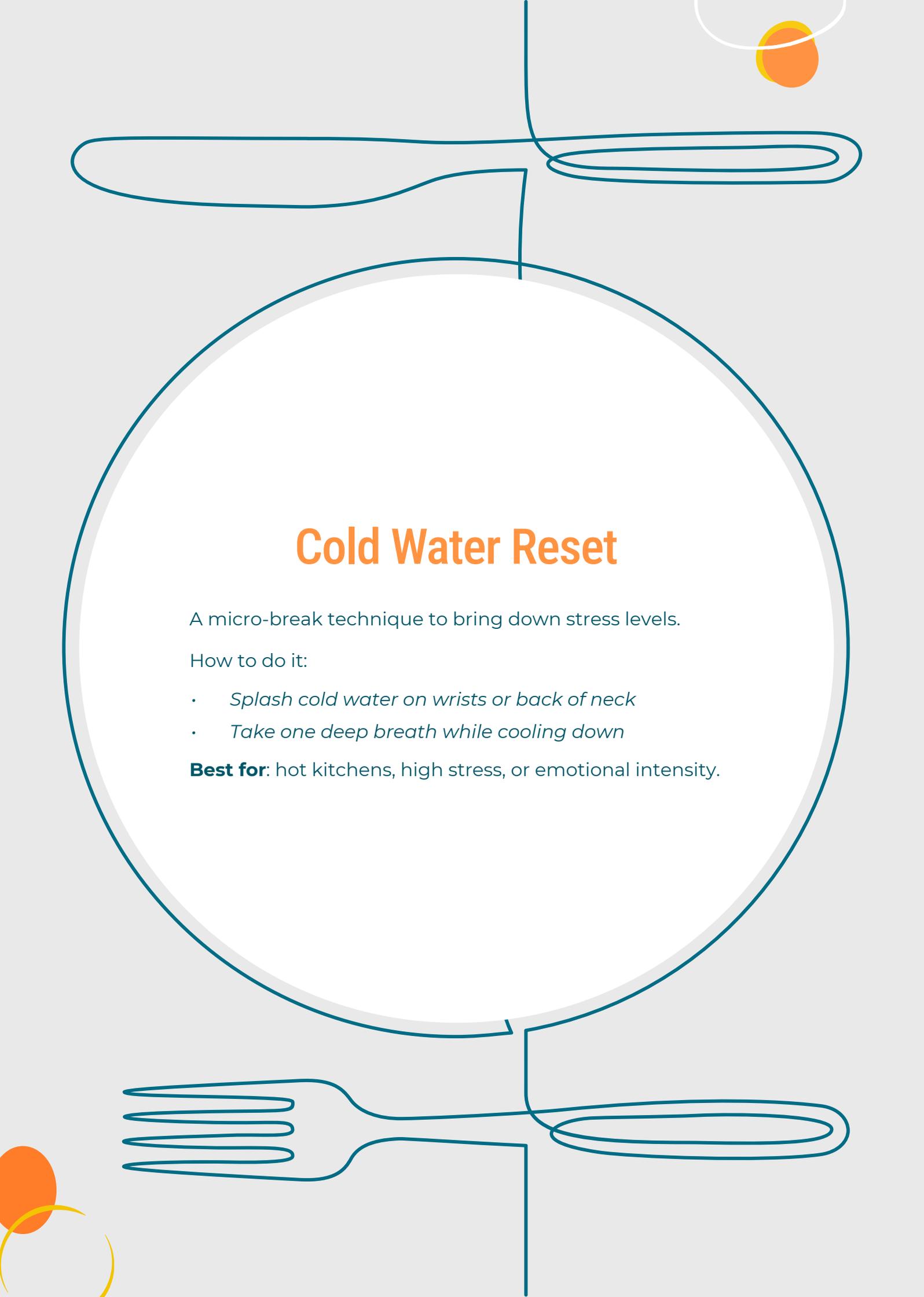
10-Second Tension Release

A quick physical reset during busy service.

How to do it:

- *Inhale and tense your shoulders, hands, arms or jaw for 5 seconds*
- *Release everything with a long exhale*
- *Let the body soften for 5 seconds*

Best for: tension, frustration, muscle fatigue.



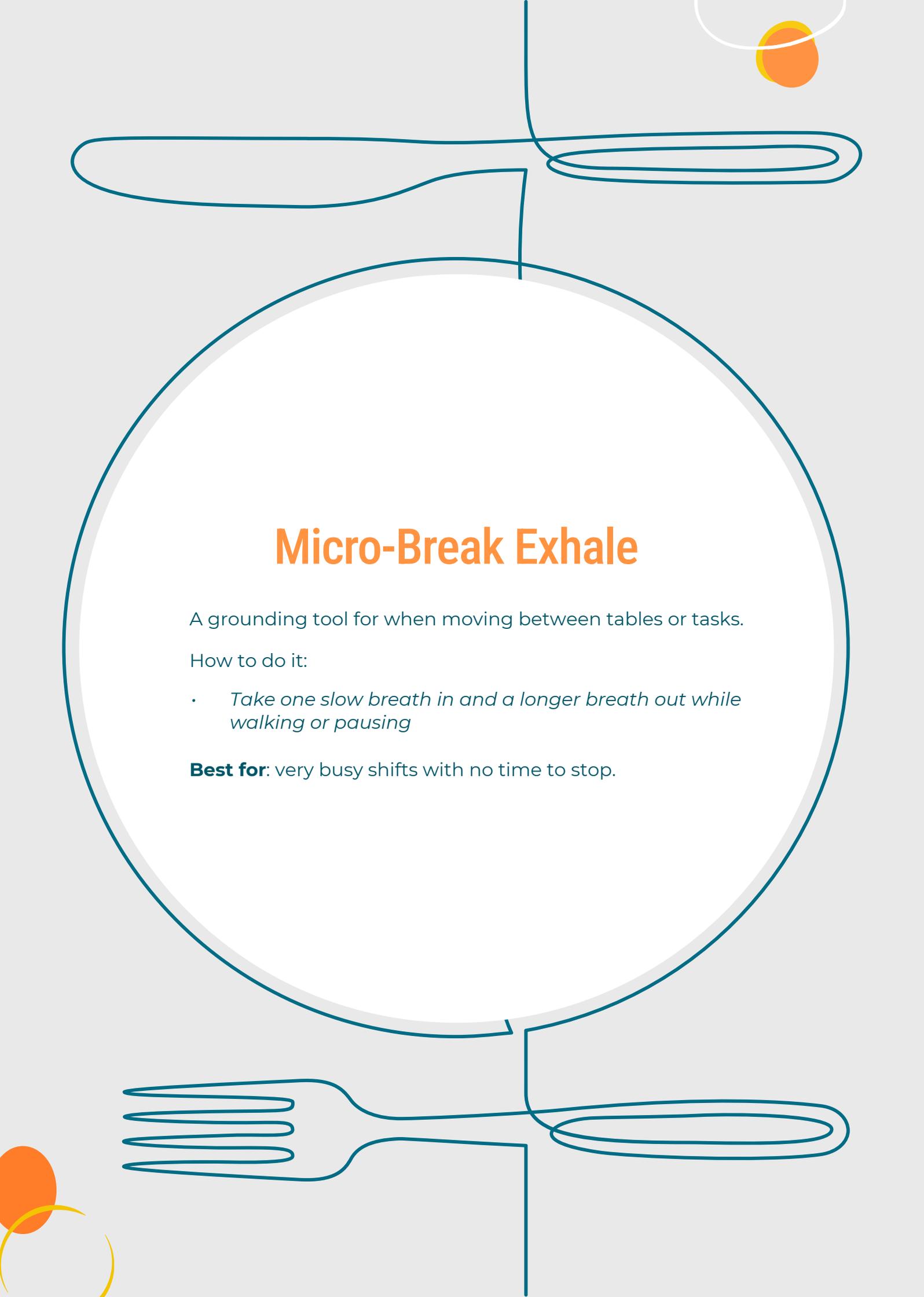
Cold Water Reset

A micro-break technique to bring down stress levels.

How to do it:

- *Splash cold water on wrists or back of neck*
- *Take one deep breath while cooling down*

Best for: hot kitchens, high stress, or emotional intensity.



Micro-Break Exhale

A grounding tool for when moving between tables or tasks.

How to do it:

- *Take one slow breath in and a longer breath out while walking or pausing*

Best for: very busy shifts with no time to stop.



Tips for Managers

- Normalise grounding techniques as part of team culture
- Encourage a 30-second breathing reset in pre-shift huddles
- Model calm behaviour during stress to help staff mirror it
- Remind staff it's safe to step away briefly after difficult interactions
- Display grounding reminder cards in staff areas

FOR MORE SUPPORT

Access grounding tools, breathing cards and wellbeing downloads via the Healthy Mind Menu Online Hub.

healthymindmenu.org.au

