



# Temperature Change Grounding (Cool Input)

*Using cold sensation to interrupt overwhelm and restore orientation*

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## **Important note**

This resource is intended to support understanding and good practice in neuro-inclusive workplace design. It provides general guidance and does not constitute legal, medical, or clinical advice. Organisations should apply the principles in line with their own policies, regulatory obligations, and professional judgement.

Short, intentional temperature changes can rapidly reduce emotional escalation, panic, and dissociation for many neurodivergent people.

Cool input works because it:

- shifts attention into the body
- interrupts rumination and emotional spirals
- activates orienting and regulation pathways
- provides clear sensory contrast (before/after)

It is **fast**, **portable**, and **optional**.

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## When cool temperature grounding helps most

This tool is especially useful when you notice:

- emotional flooding or panic
- racing thoughts you can't interrupt
- dissociation or "floaty" feelings
- rising meltdown energy
- shutdown beginning to lift but still foggy
- adrenaline after urgency or conflict

It's best used **early**, not at peak collapse.

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## Core safety principles (important)

- **Brief** is enough (5–30 seconds)
- **Controlled...** you choose intensity
- **Optional...** stop immediately if unpleasant
- **Cooling, not shocking**
- **Never use with medical contraindications** (e.g. circulation issues, cold sensitivity)

This is a **regulation cue**, not endurance.

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## Option 1. Ice Water Hands (most accessible)

How

1. Fill a bowl or sink with cool or ice water
2. Submerge hands for **5–20 seconds**

3. Remove and rest hands on a towel
4. Notice the temperature shift as sensation fades

### **Why it works**

Hands are rich in sensory receptors. Cooling them provides strong, non-threatening input that quickly redirects attention.

### **Use when**

- emotions feel “too loud”
  - thoughts won’t slow
  - you need a fast reset before continuing
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## **Option 2. Cold Face Splash (brief & grounding)**

### **How**

1. Splash cool (not icy) water on your face
2. Focus on sensation for **3–5 breaths**
3. Dry gently

### **Why it works**

Cooling the face strongly activates orienting responses and can reduce panic intensity.

### **Note**

Avoid if cold water on the face feels alarming.

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## **Option 3. Cool Air Reset (discreet & workplace-safe)**

### **How**

- Step outside briefly
- Open a window
- Stand near a fan or airflow
- Lower the room temperature slightly

Stay for **30–90 seconds**, then return.

### **Why it works**

Ambient cool air reduces overall arousal without drawing attention.

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## Option 4. Cold Object Press (quiet & portable)

### How

- Hold a cold pack, chilled bottle, or metal object
- Place it against palms, forearms, or upper chest
- Keep pressure gentle

### Why it works

Combines temperature change with proprioceptive input... grounding without shock.

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## Option 5. Contrast Reset (advanced, optional)

### How

1. Cool input for **5–10 seconds**
2. Return to neutral temperature
3. Notice the contrast

Do **not** repeat rapidly.

### Why it works

Contrast increases awareness of “settling” without prolonged cold exposure.

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## What to expect

You may notice:

- a sudden drop in emotional intensity
- clearer thinking
- a sigh or deeper breath
- attention snapping back to the present

If you notice **aversion or agitation**, stop. This tool is not universal.

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## What not to do

Avoid:

- prolonged cold exposure
- forcing yourself to tolerate discomfort
- using cold to punish emotions

- ice on sensitive areas for long periods
- using this during full shutdown collapse

Cooling is a **cue**, not a cure.

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## Pairing temperature grounding with other tools

Cool input works especially well:

- **before** hands-on-chest grounding (to interrupt, then contain)
- **before** a 10-minute rhythm reset
- **before** task entry rituals
- **after** urgency or conflict
- **during** early meltdown escalation

Think: **interrupt** → **contain** → **re-enter**.

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## For workplaces, schools, and public settings

Cool-air grounding:

- is discreet
- requires no explanation
- can be done without leaving your role
- does not look like disengagement

Organisations can support this by:

- allowing brief exits
  - providing cool spaces or airflow
  - not time-policing micro-regulation
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## If cold input doesn't work for you

Some nervous systems find cold activating rather than calming.

Alternatives include:

- warm pressure (hands on chest, weighted items)
- neutral temperature grounding
- slow movement
- visual or auditory reduction

Regulation is **individual**, not prescriptive.

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## A simple script to remember

“A short temperature shift is enough to reset my system.”

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## A final reminder

Temperature grounding isn't about shocking yourself into calm.

It's about giving your nervous system **a clear, physical interrupt...** so emotion doesn't have to keep escalating to be heard.

Small.

Brief.

On your terms.

