



Grounding

Active | Healthy Living

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WHAT MAKES IT MEANINGFUL

Knowing how to ground yourself can be a powerful tool in helping you learn how to self-regulate. It's a way to free our mind from the burden of self, and provides opportunity for us to better manage our emotions. Similar to meditation, grounding is a mindfulness exercise that encourages us to focus our attention on things that are both tangible and within our immediate environment. We use our 5 senses to anchor ourselves to the here and now, which will help reduce the severity of our symptoms and emotions. By focusing on our present state of awareness, we're able to momentarily distract our brain from the things we find most challenging or distressing. This, in turn, will help to regulate our nervous system, and bring our mind back to a place of calm awareness.

TIME

You can ground for as long or as little as you'd like, but to complete the activity below, please set aside at least 5 to 10 minutes.

MATERIALS

You don't need any additional tools or gimmicks to practice grounding exercises, which means you can engage in them at anytime, anywhere. However, some people might find it helpful to have specific items to refer to during their practice.

For example:

- You could use colour theory boards
- Numbers or letters
- Stuffed animals and/or other comfort items
- Or anything else that helps to bring your attention back to the present moment.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Find yourself a safe, quiet, and comfortable place to rest, whether that's in your bedroom, your classroom, or a local park. The key is to find a place where you will be uninterrupted for the duration of the exercise (as long as you're able to focus on the exercise at hand, a little background noise is okay. If you're sensitive to sights and sounds, then it might be best to do this in the safety and quiet of your own home).



Activity Title

2. Sit straight with your feet flat on the floor, and let your hands gently fall to your lap.
3. Once you're settled, take 3 deep breaths to help soothe your nervous system; breathe in for 3 seconds, hold for 3 seconds, and exhale for 3 seconds
4. After your third cycle of breath is complete, open your eyes to the world all around you. Name 5 things that are in your direct field of vision, and say them out loud. Afterwards, close your eyes and take 3 deep breaths again.
5. Without opening your eyes, tune in and listen to the sounds in your immediate environment. What do you hear? List 5 sounds that are audible to you in this moment - is traffic blaring in the background? Are birds chirping? Is your fan rustling the papers on your desk? Think of sounds that are both close by and far away. Take another 3 deep breaths before moving forward.
6. Now consider how your body's feeling. What physical sensations are you experiencing in this moment? Are your toes tingling? Do you feel the cold air on the tip of your nose? Name 5 things that you're feeling and sensing right now, followed by 3 deep breaths.

Other helpful grounding exercises include things like counting (i.e. counting the number of items in a room, like counting circles), categorizing (i.e. labelling all the items that fit within a particular category, like things that are red) and sensory play (touching or rubbing against something to feel its characteristics and texture).

RESOURCES

- To learn more about grounding, please visit:
<https://www.theyarethefuture.co.uk/grounding-exercises-for-kids/>.
- Interested in box breathing? Please see below for more information:
<https://www.webmd.com/balance/what-is-box-breathing>

SUPPORTS NEEDED

It might be helpful to try this activity for the first time with a close friend or confidant, particularly if you're doing this grounding exercise in response to a stressful or triggering situation.