

Grounding Techniques

For Help With Intense Emotions, Disturbing Memories, & Feelings of Unreality

What Is It?

Grounding techniques are a set of tools used to assist individuals to stay in the present moment during episodes of intense anxiety or other over-whelming emotions. Staying in the present moment allows people to feel safe and in control by focusing on the physical world and how they experience it.

How it Works

Grounding is easy to do. Just focus on some aspect of the physical world, rather than on your internal thoughts and feelings (see suggestions below). Focus on the present rather than the past. Practice your grounding techniques so that they will come naturally when you are upset. Let go of any negative feelings. Try a variety of techniques and rate the effectiveness of each technique in keeping you calm (see p. 2). Have others assist you in using these techniques by reminding you to practice them and use them as soon as you are feeling emotionally distressed.

Video Demonstration

[Click here to](#) see how a therapist helps a client with PTSD become more focused during a session using the Grounding Technique. Courtesy of The National Center for Traumatic Stress



<http://youtu.be/DFxRs1oFiEE>

Try It

Here are some suggestions of grounding techniques, but you can make up your own as well.

- Run cool water over your hands.
- Grab tightly onto your chair as hard as you can.
- Touch various objects around you: a pen, keys, your clothing, or the wall.
- Dig your heels into the floor-literally “grounding” them! Notice the tension centered in your heels as you do this. Remind yourself you are connected to the ground.
- Carry a grounding object in your pocket, which you can touch whenever you feel triggered.
- Notice your body: the weight of your body in the chair; wiggle your toes in your socks; the feel of your chair against your back...
- Stretch. Roll your head around.
- Clench and release your fists.
- Walk slowly; notice each footstep, saying “left or “right”... in detail to yourself.
- Focus on your breathing, notice each inhale and exhale.
- Eat something, describing the flavors to yourself.
- Focus on your breathing, notice each inhale and exhale.

See additional techniques on the next page.

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Recording Sheet

Begin by writing in five or more techniques you want to practice. Practice them several times a day for five minutes or until you feel calm and in control.

Circle the number that best describes the effectiveness of each technique.

1=no effect 2=little effect 3=effective, but took time 4=effective in keeping me calm and focused 5=immediate calming effect

Technique	Date Started	Rating	Comments
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