

Grounding Techniques

Sensory grounding techniques

- Splash your face with cool water. Or run water over your hands.
- Name 5 things you can see around you. Naming objects around you engages your brain's verbal system and helpfully suppresses your imagery, memory, and emotional systems.
- Play the 5-4-3-2-1 game. Name 5 things you can see around you, 4 things you can hear, 3 things you can touch, 2 things you can smell, 1 thing you can taste.
- Carry a sensory grounding object in your pocket. It can be something with nice sensory properties that you can touch when you are triggered. Perhaps a pebble or a squeeze stress ball.
- Carry a meaningful grounding object. One that reminds you that you survived, that you are loved, or that you are strong. Perhaps a letter or a photograph that means something to you.
- Use a grounding smell. Strong smells such as ammonia smelling salts or tea tree oil can bring your attention back to the here and now. Many people like to carry hand cream with them which has a pleasant smell.
- Stretch your body. Reach up and try to touch the sky, then bend down and try to touch the ground.
- Press your feet into the floor. Literally 'ground' yourself.
- Clench and release your fists. Imagine allowing tension to drain away from your body.
- Eat something. Describe the flavors and textures to yourself.
- Walk slowly and mindfully. Really pay attention to the feeling of each step.
- Focus on your breathing. Notice how your body feels as you breathe in and out.
- Go outside and appreciate nature. Feel the breeze on your face, watch the clouds, pay attention to life around you.
- Have a bath or a shower. Distract yourself with the feelings and smells.
- Exercise. Go for a run or walk.

Cognitive grounding techniques

- Describe where you are and what is around you.
- Describe when you are. Say to yourself what year, month, day, and time is it.
- Prove to yourself that you are safe. Remind yourself where and when your trauma occurred then remind yourself where you are now, and how long it has been since the trauma ended.
- Say kind statements to yourself. Say them as though you were talking to a small child. For example "It's no wonder that you feel unsafe if you are having unwanted memories", "You are safe and loved now."
- Imagine or remember a safe place. Focus on the qualities of this place and why it makes you feel good.
- Say a coping statement. For example "This too shall pass", "I can handle this."
- Repeat an inspiring quote, song, or poem to yourself.
- Remind yourself that you are safe. Say to yourself "It's over now", "I am safe now".
- Carry a kind letter to yourself. Write it when you are feeling strong. One that reminds you how far you have come.