



Grounding Techniques

Grounding techniques can help shift someone out of a trauma response, anxiety spiral, or thought loop, and reorient someone to the present. These tools bring calm to someone who is over-activated, or gently stimulate someone who is under-activated. They can help to redirect focus, bring people to a more stable baseline, and center them in the present moment. These techniques can be done with a focus on either the body or the mind.

Body

5-4-3-2-1 Senses

Observe and describe in detail five things you see, four things you can touch, three things you can hear, two things you can smell, and one thing you taste. The more detailed description, the more effective it will be.

Sensory Accessory

Choose one image to focus on, an object to hold and touch, a sound or song to listen to, a scent to smell, or one thing to taste. Focus on this one item with that sense and describe the experience to yourself in detail.

Feet to the Ground

Notice your feet on the floor and how they feel. Wiggle your toes. Stomp your feet on the ground several times and notice the sensations.

Palms Together

Press your palms together several times and notice the pressure. Then, rub your hands together quickly until you can feel the heat from the friction.

Tense and Release

Clench your fists while you inhale and release them repeatedly while you exhale. Try tensing and releasing other muscle groups as well.

Cold Temperatures

Hold a cold pack on your face, splash your face with cold water, or try holding a piece of ice. Notice the sensations of cold on your skin.

Breathe

Put your hand on your stomach. Take several slow deep breaths into your stomach. Feel your hand move with each inhale and exhale.

Stretch and Move

Gently move and stretch your body in a way that feels good. Notice the sensation of each stretch and each movement.



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Mind

Safe

Imagine yourself in a safe place that creates a sense of comfort for you. Describe the scenery to yourself in detail. Avoid places with any negative associations.

Loved One

Picture being with a safe, loving person in your life. Imagine how they look at you and treat you. Notice how this makes you feel.

Categories

Pick a simple category and list 5-10 items (e.g., states/capitals, clothing brands, movies, favorite animals, foods, full names of friends, etc.).

Counting

Count by nines as far as you can go. Count backwards from 100 by fours or sevens.

Name Game:

Spell your full name and the name of five friends or family members. Then spell the names backwards.

Step By Step

Think of a daily activity (e.g., cooking a meal or doing laundry). List and describe every small step in the process to yourself.

Reading Backwards

Pick a passage from a book or magazine and read it backwards one letter and one word at a time.

Mental Drawing

Pick a pleasant image and imagine drawing it with your finger.

Music Recital

Listen to one of your favorite songs and then try to recall all of the lyrics.