

Grounding Techniques

Grounding techniques are relaxing and pleasurable activities that decrease stress and anxiety. When you are anxious, you are out of touch with the present moment. Anxious thoughts are past and future focused. These techniques help you reconnect to the present and feel calmer and safer in the here and now.

Most of the techniques presented below involve focusing on some aspect of your five senses: touch, taste, sight, sound, and smell. **Senses are in the present.** By heightening your awareness of your surroundings and your body, you can also heighten your awareness of the moment you are currently living within.

- Press your feet firmly to the ground to remind yourself where you are.
- Carry a polished stone or soft piece of cloth with you to touch.
- Carry a soothing picture with you and look at it when you are feeling anxious.
- Eat or drink a favorite food. Enjoy it slowly. Don't do anything else while you are consuming it except focus on enjoying and savoring it.
- Notice where you are, including the people, sites, and sounds as if you were watching a T.V. show.
- Exercise, Stretch. Massage your muscles to relax them and reduce tension.
- Concentrate on your breathing. Take a deep cleansing breath in through your nose and count. Exhale slowly through your mouth for twice as long. Continue for five minutes.
- Slowly and deliberately cross your legs and arms. Feel the sensations of you controlling your body.
- Call a friend and talk to them about something you have recently done together or want to do together.
- Take a warm, relaxing bubble bath or shower and pay attention to the water touching your body.
- Light a candle of your favorite scent or visit a place with enjoyable smells (bakery, coffee shop, etc.)
- Verbalize the following "It was just thought or memory." "It's over now." "I am safe now." Give yourself permission to not think about it right now.
- Realize that no matter how small you feel, you are an adult. Envision yourself being safe, strong, and capable.
- Find your pulse on your wrist or neck and count the beats per minute.
- Go outside. If it's warm, feel the sun shining down on your face. If it's cold, feel the breeze tickle against your skin. How does it make your body feel? Sit against a tree. Feel the bark pressing against your back. Smell the outside aromas like the grass and leaves. Run your fingers through the grass.
- Hold something that you find comforting, a stuffed animal or a blanket. Notice how it feels in your hands.
- Go outside and watch the clouds or go for a walk.
- Get active. Do the dishes, clean your room, or redecorate. Organize your dresser or closet.
- Pet or play with an animal. If you don't have one, visit a friend, pet store, or shelter.
- Listen to a familiar, comforting music and sing along to it. Dance to it.
- Write in your journal. Pay attention to yourself holding the pencil. Write about what you are remembering and visualize the memory traveling out of you into the pencil and onto the paper. Tear the paper up.
- Watch a favorite and fun TV program, DVD, or go to your favorite website. Play a videogame.
- Color in a coloring book or doodle on a notepad. Focus on the feeling of your writing utensil moving across the paper.
- Look up pictures or paintings online that you find beautiful. Save them as your background image or hang them in your room.
- Check out an audiobook from the library and listen to it.
- Go somewhere you've never been before (restaurant, museum, etc.).
- Play white noise (simplynoise.com) or running water. Set up a mini water fountain or run a fan to provide soothing background noise. Go to a park or the Arboretum and listen to the sounds in nature.

