

Grounding Techniques

Exercises to stay present and calm during anxiety or dissociation

Grounding techniques help bring you back to the present moment when you feel anxious, overwhelmed, or disconnected. Try different techniques to find what works best for you.

The 5-4-3-2-1 Sensory Technique

This technique uses all five senses to ground you in the present moment:

5 things you can SEE

Look around and name 5 things you can see. Notice colors, shapes, textures.

4 things you can TOUCH

Notice 4 things you're touching or can touch. Feel textures, temperatures.

3 things you can HEAR

Listen carefully. What 3 sounds can you hear right now?

2 things you can SMELL

What 2 scents can you smell? If nothing, name 2 favorite scents.

1 thing you can TASTE

Notice 1 thing you can taste, or name your favorite flavor.

Other Grounding Techniques

Physical Grounding

- Plant your feet firmly on the ground. Notice the contact.
- Hold an ice cube or splash cold water on your face
- Stretch your body or do jumping jacks
- Clench and release your fists 10 times
- Press your hands together as hard as you can for 10 seconds

Mental Grounding

- Count backwards from 100 by 7s
- Name all 50 states or countries you've visited
- Recite the alphabet backwards
- Name items in a category (animals, cities, foods)
- Describe an object in detail (color, shape, texture, purpose)

Soothing Grounding

- Say kind statements to yourself: 'I am safe', 'This will pass'
- Picture a safe, peaceful place in detail
- Think of your favorite things (songs, foods, people, places)
- Remember a happy memory and relive it
- Plan a treat for yourself (a movie, meal, activity)

Breathing Techniques

- 4-7-8 breathing: Inhale 4 counts, hold 7, exhale 8
- Box breathing: Inhale 4, hold 4, exhale 4, hold 4
- Belly breathing: Place hand on belly, breathe deeply

