

Grounding Techniques

Used by permission of Emma Sullivan Uebele

1. Noticing the Present

Find a comfortable seated position, in a chair or on the ground. Notice your feet, firmly planted on the ground. Pay attention to how your body feels, supported by the chair or the ground underneath you.

Now, notice what is around you. What sounds do you hear? What textures can you feel? What colors and shapes do you see? Notice how it feels to slow down and pay attention to your surroundings.

2. Breathing Seated

Getting Started: Begin by sitting comfortably in a chair or on the ground. Feel your feet on the ground and take a deep breath. Notice how it feels to breathe in your body right now. Where does it feel like the air goes when you breathe in? Out?

Notice Your Breath: If you are comfortable, close your eyes, or look softly in front of you. Take a deep breath in through your nose and breathe out slowly through your mouth. Notice how this feels in your body. How does the air feel? Is it warm? Cool? Damp? Dry? Keep breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth. Take your time.

Deepen Your Breath: Bring your hands to the sides of your ribs, one on each side of your body. See if you can send air into both hands when you breathe. Take 3 deep breaths like this.

Now bring one hand to your chest and the other to your stomach. See if you can breathe into the whole length of your lungs, sending air into both hands at the same time.

Take 3 deep breaths like this.

Now bring one hand to your back and leave the other hand on your stomach. See if you can breathe into the front and back of your body, sending air into both your hands at the same time. Take 3 deep breaths like this.

Return to Present: Return to your normal breathing. Does it feel different than when you started this exercise? How does your body feel now? Where does it feel like the air is going when you breathe? Do you feel more relaxed? Maybe you noticed a pain you didn't realize was there before. Do you feel taller? What else do you notice?

Sometime you can feel a little dizzy if you're not used to taking deep breaths, that's completely normal. Let your breathing return to its usual rhythm as you find your feet on the floor and slowly look around the room. Notice what you are seeing and hearing to help bring you back to the present moment.

3. Breathing with Movement

Getting Started: This exercise can be done either sitting comfortably or standing.

Start by taking 5 deep breaths, in through your nose and out through your mouth.

Seated Stretch (3 min): Place your hands on your legs. Breathe in and lift your chest, lifting the chin and head. As you breathe out round your spine forward, tucking chin in towards the chest. Follow this pattern, breathing in and lifting the chest, breathing out and rounding forward. Keep going for a few minutes.

Seated Side Stretch (3 min): Now, breathe in and reach one arm up above your head, leaning over to other the side as you do. Breathe out as you reach back down. Now, lift the other arm over your head, leaning over to the other side. Keep breathing and switching sides. Repeat several times each direction.

Returning to present: Once you have spent a few minutes on either side, finish by taking 3 deep breaths in the center, feeling your feet on the floor, arms resting at your sides. Notice how your body feels now.

4. Full Body Grounding (feet up)

This technique can be done seated in a chair or standing, by yourself or with a group of people. If standing, it is helpful to stand near something or someone you can use for balance as needed.

Getting Started: Begin by taking 3 deep breaths in through the nose and out through the mouth. Feel your feet on the floor, and notice how your body feels right now. Now, lift one foot and draw small circles with that foot, several in each direction moving at the ankle. Then move up to the knee bending and straightening it several times. Standing on one leg, shake out the whole leg and step it firmly back to the ground.

Notice how the leg you just moved feels compared to the leg that was still. Repeat this exercise for the other leg.

Moving Up the Body: Now, move your hips, going around in circles both directions. Then the shoulders, rolling them forward and backwards, several times each way. Take your time as you move up through the body. Now, reach one hand out in front of you and start moving your fingers, as if you are playing the piano or waving at a friend. Then roll the wrist a few times each way, moving up to the elbow and doing the same.

Repeat this for the other hand and arm.

Finishing Up: With both feet firmly planted on the ground, gently rock your head side to side a few times. Then nod your chin down towards your chest and then look up towards to the sky. After you've done this several times, nod your chin again and continue to roll down through your spine reaching your hands towards your toes.

Keep your knees soft, and just go as far as it feels good in your body. Take a couple breaths there, rounded forward, arms hanging towards the ground. Then find your feet on the floor and start to roll back up to standing. Go slowly, trying to move one piece of your body at a time, stacking up all the way tall. Repeat this two more times.

Notice how your body and your breath feel now, compared to when you started.