Grounding & mindfulness

Grounding techniques are a set of practices designed to help individuals connect with the present moment, their surroundings, and themselves.

These techniques can be particularly helpful during times of stress or anxiety, as they provide a way to anchor oneself in the here and now.

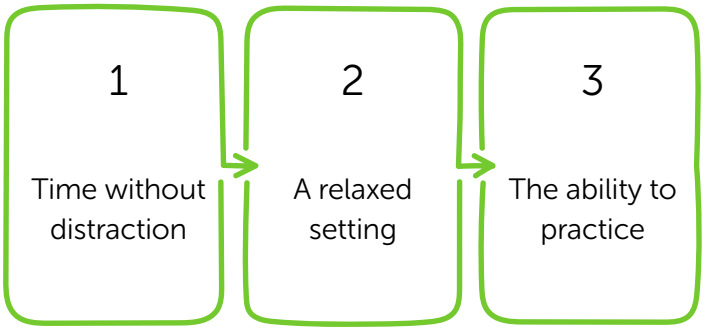
Grounding techniques can vary widely, but they often involve engaging the senses, focusing on the body, or connecting with the environment in some way.

What is it useful for?

Grounding oneself and focussing on the moment in hand is a really effective way to help manage the symptoms of worry or anxiety, and provides emotional self regulation when we feels distress. The action can provide clarity of thought based around mindfulness practices that can help with relaxation and sleep.

The process is simple, but finding the right time and space to practice the exercises might require some thought.

Just like learning any new skill, the more we engage with the exercises the greater the benefit we will receive.



What is happening?

Grounding techniques can:

- Lead to a decrease in the production of stress hormones such as cortisol and adrenaline, hormones that are released in response to stress and trigger the body's fight, flight or freeze response.
- Help us release endorphins, neurotransmitters that act as natural painkillers and mood elevators. These promote feelings of wellbeing, reduce pain perception, and contribute to a sense of calm and contentment.
- Activates our parasympathetic nervous system, leading to a decrease in heart rate, blood pressure, and muscle tension, promoting relaxation and a state of physiological equilibrium.
- Increase GABA levels, an inhibitory neurotransmitter that helps regulate anxiety, stress, and fear.

Overall, grounding techniques promote a shift in the body's biochemistry towards relaxation, calmness, and emotional balance.

Your Toolkit

Ground yourself

Begin by taking a few deep breaths, inhaling slowly through your nose and exhaling through your mouth.

Notice the sensation of your breath as it enters and leaves your body, anchoring yourself in the present moment.

Engage your senses

Close your eyes and bring your awareness to each of your senses, one by one:

- Sight: Notice any patterns of light or shadow behind your closed eyelids.
- Sound: Listen to the sounds around you, whether it's the hum of appliances, the rustle of leaves, or the distant sounds of traffic. Allow each sound to come and go.
- Touch: Feel the support beneath you, whether you're sitting or lying down. Notice the sensation of your clothing against your skin, the temperature of the air on your face, and any points of contact with the floor or furniture.
- Smell: Take a deep breath in through your nose and notice any scents in the air, whether it's the aroma of flowers, food cooking nearby, or the freshness of the outdoors.
- Taste: If you have a drink or snack nearby, take a mindful sip or bite, noticing the flavour, texture, and sensation in your mouth.

Body scan

Starting from the top of your head, slowly scan down through your body, noticing any areas of tension, discomfort, or relaxation. With each breath, allow any tension or tightness to soften and release.

Mindful movement

If you feel called to move, engage in some gentle mindful movement:

- Stretch your arms overhead and reach towards the sky.
- Roll your shoulders back and down, releasing any tension.
- Rotate your wrists and ankles gently, noticing the sensations in your joints.

Allow your body to move in whatever way feels good, focusing on the sensation of movement and theconnection with your breath.

Reflect

As you come to the end of your practice, take a moment to reflect on how you feel. Notice any shifts in your mood, energy, or awareness.