



## How Grounding Works

Grounding techniques often use the five senses—**sound, touch, smell, taste, and sight**—to immediately connect you with the here and now. For example, singing a song, rubbing lotion on your hands, or sucking on sweets are all grounding techniques that produce sensations that are difficult to ignore to distract you from worry about the future or ruminating on the past. These strategies will help you to connect with the present moment.

You may need to do some trial and error before you figure out what grounding techniques work best for you. Pay attention to the coping mechanisms you've already developed to help you get through anxiety and see if you can build on them and/or use them as grounding techniques.

### Grounding to reduce feelings of anxiety.

The nice thing about using grounding as a coping technique is that many of these techniques can be done in any environment. You might be home alone or out in public, but once you are aware of feeling anxious or having negative thoughts you can use grounding to move your focus back to the present. Working on grounding takes dedication and it becomes easier over time. If these grounding techniques don't work for you, try something else. The aim is to live in the now and focus on the present when the past starts coming up.

## Grounding Techniques

To connect with the here and now, do something (or several things) that will bring all your attention to the present moment. Be sure to keep your eyes open while you're grounding yourself so you're aware of everything that's going on around you.



### Sound

- Turn up the radio or blast your favourite song.
- Talk out loud about what you see, hear, or what you're thinking or doing.
- Call a loved one.
- Put on some nature sounds such as birds chirping or waves crashing.
- Read out loud, whether it's a favourite children's book, a blog article, or the latest novel.



## Touch

- Hold an ice cube and let it melt in your hand.
  - Put your hands under running water.
  - Take a hot or cool shower.
  - Grab an article of clothing, a blanket, or a towel and knead it in your hands or hold it to your cheek. Concentrate on what it feels like.
- Pop some bubble wrap.
  - Massage your temples.
  - If you have a dog or cat, cuddle, and pet him or her.
  - Drink a hot or cold beverage.
  - Stomp your feet
  - Tap your shoulders and the top of your arms.
  - Give yourself a hug.



## Smell

- Sniff strong peppermint, which also has the benefit of having a soothing effect.
- Light a scented candle or melt scented wax.
- Get some essential oils that remind you of good times (freshly cut grass, rain, clean laundry, or sugar cookies, for example) and smell one.



## Taste

- Bite into a lemon or lime.
- Suck on a mint taking your awareness to the taste and how the mint reduces in size.
- Take a bite of a pepper or some hot salsa.
- Let a piece of chocolate melt in your mouth, noticing how it tastes and feels as you roll it around with your tongue.



## Sight

Take a mental inventory of everything around you, such as all the colours and patterns you see, the sounds you hear, and the scents you smell. Saying this out loud is helpful too.

- Put on your favourite movie or TV show.
- Play a distracting game on your tablet, computer, or smartphone.
- Complete a crossword puzzle, sudoku, word search, or other puzzles.
- Read a book or magazine.
- Write in a journal about how you're feeling or keep a list of prompts handy that you can use to decide what to write about.
- Dance.
- Stretch your arms, neck, and legs.
- Go for a walk
- Go to another room or area for a change of scenery.

## Other suggestions...

- Meditate
- Sing
- Foot / head massage
- Do a home manicure / pedicure
- Name as many animals (or countries, capital cities etc) beginning with a, b,c
- Do some home Yoga...so good on many levels
- Slow down the breath.
- Adult colouring books (available online)
- Jigsaw Puzzles

And to finish...

## 54321 Technique

List

5 things that you can see  
4 things that you can hear  
3 things that you can touch  
2 things that you can smell  
And finally take 1 deep breath