

Grounding Exercises You Can Do Anywhere in 5 Minutes or Less

Grounding, mindfulness and meditation are all terms for ways to focus your mind to the present moment. These techniques have been clinically proven to reduce stress and anxiety, alleviate depression and increase happiness. They do not have to take a long time.

Here are some you can do at your desk, in your living room or wherever is needed. Practice them regularly at times of relative calm, and use them again if you start to feel more anxious or panicky. If you get distracted as you try them, simply acknowledge that your mind has wandered and return to the exercise at hand.

- **5-4-3-2-1**

Look straight ahead and remain still. Name (in your head or out loud):

- 5 things you can see
- 4 things you can feel (textures, pressures against your body)
- 3 things you can hear
- 2 things you can smell (you may have to move to get the second one)
- 1 thing you can taste

- **Body awareness**

Sit or lie down comfortably. Turn your attention to your toes. Notice all the sensations in your toes. What are they touching? Is there a difference between your right and left toes, the tops and the bottoms, your big toe and your little toe?

Now move to your feet and notice those sensations, pressures, textures and temperatures. Then move to your ankles. Continue through the various parts of your body

This exercise can start with any part of your body you choose, and can either proceed through the whole body or stop after 5 minutes.

- **Noticing an object**

Choose any object you have around (a pen, the buttons on your shirt, or even your own hand will work just fine). List to yourself (in your head or out loud) as many observable facts as possible about the object (e.g. this pen is blue, has a cap, it is about 5 inches long, it is made of plastic). Make sure you use facts – no opinions!

You will find that this is easy to start with and you will fairly quickly run out of obvious facts. Take a moment to look, feel, smell, listen, or even taste (if it's safe to do so). Turn it around. Lift it up. There are always more facts to notice. Push yourself to notice more and more. See how long you can go!

- **Four square breathing**

Sit or lie down comfortably. Breathe deeply from your diaphragm. Keep your focus on your breath and return your thoughts to your breath if you become distracted. Take a deep breath in for a slow count of 4. Hold your breath for a slow count of 4. Breathe out for 4. Repeat.

- **Love and compassion**

Close your eyes and take a few slow, deep breaths. Direct your attention to someone you love. Notice the feeling of love and compassion that you have for them. Notice that you know and believe that they are a human being worthy of love and dignity. Imagine sending your love and compassion through the air to them.

Now focus on the people you care for. Repeat to yourself that they are human beings worthy of love and dignity. Send that same energy of love and compassion through the air to them.

Now focus on yourself. Notice that you, too, are a human being worthy of love and dignity. Surround yourself with that feeling that you have been sending through the air to others.