

101 Ways to Get Grounded

A practical menu of ideas for coming back to the present

Grounding is not about forcing yourself to calm down.

It is about helping your mind and body notice: I am here, this is now, and I have choices. Different strategies work at different times. Tick anything you are willing to try, circle the ones that help, and ignore the ones that do not.

1. Body & Senses

Use physical sensation, movement, temperature, texture, taste or smell to reconnect with the here-and-now.

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| ☐ Look around slowly and name where you are. | ☐ Drink tea, coffee, hot chocolate, or water slowly. |
| ☐ Press both feet into the floor. | ☐ Eat something mindfully, noticing taste, texture, and temperature. |
| ☐ Notice the support of the chair beneath you. | ☐ Stretch your arms, shoulders, back, and legs. |
| ☐ Feel the texture of your socks, shoes, or clothing. | ☐ Tense one muscle group for 10 seconds, then release. |
| ☐ Hold something cold for a few moments. | ☐ Alternate tensing and relaxing different muscle groups. |
| ☐ Hold something warm and notice the temperature. | ☐ Push your palms together firmly for a few seconds. |
| ☐ Splash cool water on your face or hands. | ☐ Push against a wall and feel the strength in your arms and legs. |
| ☐ Wash your hands slowly with scented soap. | ☐ Stand up and shake out your hands and feet. |
| ☐ Take a shower or bath and notice the water on your skin. | ☐ Walk slowly and notice each footstep. |
| ☐ Hold a smooth stone, coin, bracelet, or other small object. | ☐ Go for a brisk walk. |
| ☐ Squeeze a stress ball or piece of putty. | ☐ Ride a bike or use another form of steady movement. |
| ☐ Wrap yourself in a blanket or hold a soft fabric. | ☐ Bounce or throw a ball. |
| ☐ Stroke or hug a pet, if that feels safe. | ☐ Do a short burst of safe exercise. |
| ☐ Notice five colours around you. | ☐ Swing at a playground or gently rock in a chair. |
| ☐ Smell coffee, peppermint, citrus, soap, or another familiar scent. | ☐ Stand outside and notice the air on your skin. |
| ☐ Use a favourite hand cream or lotion and notice the smell and texture. | ☐ Notice three things your body can feel right now. |

2. Mind & Attention

Give your brain a clear, concrete task. Orientation and gentle thinking can help interrupt spiralling, flashbacks or dissociation.

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| ☐ Say your name, age, today's date, and where you are. | ☐ Do a Sudoku, crossword, word search, or puzzle. |
| ☐ Name the current year and season. | ☐ Name the song that is playing. |
| ☐ Remind yourself: 'That was then; this is now.' | ☐ Look outside and describe exactly what you see. |
| ☐ Name five things you can see. | ☐ Look for birds, trees, clouds, traffic, or other signs of ordinary life. |
| ☐ Name four things you can feel. | ☐ Notice what is different about today compared with the past. |
| ☐ Name three things you can hear. | ☐ Name five things that are safer or better now. |
| ☐ Name two things you can smell. | ☐ Ask yourself: 'Am I in the present right now?' |
| ☐ Name one thing you can taste. | ☐ Check in with yourself: What am I feeling? What do I need? |
| ☐ Describe one object in as much detail as possible. | ☐ Take one slow breath in and one longer breath out. |
| ☐ Find every item you can see of one colour. | ☐ Count your breaths for one minute. |
| ☐ Count backwards from 100. | ☐ Read something hopeful, absorbing, or familiar. |
| ☐ Say the alphabet backwards or every second letter. | ☐ Write down five strengths or qualities you value in yourself. |
| ☐ Name five countries, cities, films, songs, or animals. | ☐ If five feels too hard, write down two. |
| ☐ Play a simple trivia game. | ☐ Remind yourself of one thing you have already survived. |

60-second reset: Name where you are → press your feet down → find 3 things you can see → notice 2 sounds → take 1 slower breath.

3. Everyday Connection & Activity

Grounding can also happen through ordinary routines, safe connection, play and purposeful activity.

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| ☐ Phone or message someone you trust. | ☐ Water a plant. |
| ☐ Spend time with a friend or safe person. | ☐ Work in the garden or tend to houseplants. |
| ☐ Sit near other people, even if you do not feel like talking. | ☐ Notice changes in the weather or season. |
| ☐ Take a short, safe trip somewhere familiar. | ☐ Listen to music you know well. |
| ☐ Go to a park, café, bookshop, library, gallery, or museum. | ☐ Sing along to a favourite song. |
| ☐ Visit a shop with pleasant scents or textures. | ☐ Play an instrument. |
| ☐ Cook or bake something simple. | ☐ Dance or move to music. |
| ☐ Wash the dishes while noticing the water and soap. | ☐ Play a card game or board game. |
| ☐ Tidy one small area rather than the whole room. | ☐ Play a video game that involves movement or attention. |
| ☐ Clean or organise something manageable. | ☐ Do a sport or other familiar physical activity. |
| ☐ Fold laundry and notice the texture and clean smell. | ☐ Offer someone help with one manageable task. |
| ☐ Take care of your hair or another simple self-care task. | |

Tip: Choose small actions. 'Wash one cup' or 'step outside for two minutes' can be more grounding than setting yourself a large task.

4. Creative Grounding

Creativity can bring attention into the present while also offering choice, expression and a sense of agency.

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| ☐ Draw, colour, paint, or doodle. | ☐ Learn a simple dance. |
| ☐ Make something with clay, putty, or craft materials. | ☐ Knit, crochet, sew, quilt, or do needlework. |
| ☐ Create a collage of places, people, words, or images that feel safe or hopeful. | ☐ Make pottery or another hands-on craft. |
| ☐ Make a small scrapbook of positive memories or meaningful places. | ☐ Write a poem. |
| ☐ Trace or colour a detailed picture. | ☐ Write a short story. |
| ☐ Take photographs of ordinary things that catch your attention. | ☐ Write in a journal. |
| ☐ Make a bracelet, keyring, or small grounding object. | ☐ Learn a few words in a new language. |
| ☐ Create a 'five senses' grounding box. | ☐ Do something playful or funny. |
| ☐ Make a playlist for settling, energising, or reconnecting. | ☐ Create your own grounding idea. |

My Grounding Plan

When I notice I am becoming ungrounded, I usually notice:

Three things I am willing to try:

A person I can contact:

A place that usually helps me feel more present:

One reminder I want to give myself:

Source and attribution

This client handout is an adapted and reorganised summary of the grounding ideas presented in Schielke, H. J., Brand, B. L., & Lanius, R. A. (2022), *The Finding Solid Ground Program Workbook: Overcoming Obstacles in Trauma Recovery* (Oxford University Press), particularly the grounding material on pp. 22–26. The wording and layout here have been changed for ease of clinical use.

Grounding is individual. A strategy that helps one person may not help another. If an exercise increases distress or disconnection, stop and choose something else.