

26 (A – Z) Suggested Grounding Techniques by Dr. Ken McGill

Use the suggestions below to help you decrease distress and anxiety, stay present and “in the moment” with your emotions, and cultivate emotional well-being experiences for yourself – Dr. Ken McGill

A	<i>Activate your ability to help yourself</i> by employing these strategies and techniques when intrusive thoughts or emotions cause you to feel overwhelmed, panicked, or powerless.
B	<i>Breathing deeply for 1 – 2 minutes is one of the best strategies to employ.</i> Breathing deeply from your abdomen creates internal calm and signals to your body you’re going to be safe.
C	<i>Create a Grounding Toolkit.</i> Stock it with items that help you to connect with your 5 senses (5 things you see, 4 things you feel, 3 things you hear, 2 things you smell and 1 thing you taste).
D	<i>Doing aerobic exercise to discharge energy is a good start!</i> Do 50 jumping jacks, run up and down the stairs or on a treadmill, walk around the block, dance to 3 songs on your playlist!
E	<i>Exorcise the Inner Critic!</i> Replace harsh and negative self-statements with comforting ones (“I’m enough; I’m an amazing person; It’s ok to make mistakes; I’m going to have a good day”).
F	<i>Focus on staying present by noticing</i> and describing your physical surroundings (“The walls are white, the wood is smooth, there are 2 chairs in the room, and one desk lamp is on”).
G	<i>Go outside and feel one of your grounding objects:</i> Feel the ground beneath your feet, pick up a rock and notice the color and texture in your hand. Feel its weight as you toss it up and down.
H	<i>Help yourself by listening to a few inspirational songs on your playlist,</i> or walk outside and listen to birds chirping, the wind blowing, the chimes ringing, or an instrument being played.
I	<i>Inhale aromas from scented candles, oils, or flowers growing or freshly cut in your garden.</i> Take in a deep whiff of perfume, cologne, scented lotions or freshly baked cookies!
J	<i>Jolly Ranchers, hard candies or other tasty morsels</i> are excellent items to keep handy to activate your sense of taste! Coffee, tea, a favorite soft drink or a snack eaten slowly helps as well!
K	<i>Keep your eyes open and scan your room.</i> Name 5 things that are the color blue, 4 things that are green, 3 things that are brown, 2 things that are white and one thing that is black.
L	<i>Look at photos of yourself taken</i> when you were in a pleasant, peaceful, satisfied or playful mood. Boost your spirit by noticing how happy, content, safe, uplifted and serene you were!
M	<i>Make a list describing what your perfect day would look like.</i> What location? Would anyone else be there? What activities would be a part of your day? How would it end?
N	<i>“Insert” your hands or face in cold water</i> for 30 seconds. Place a cold washcloth on your neck for 60 seconds. Place an icepack on your eyes for 30 seconds. Hold ice cubes in your hands.
Q	<i>One day at a time</i> is a great way to refocus your mind on matters that are “here and now” versus experiences of the past (which you can’t change), or future (which may not occur).
P	<i>Practice an “age progression.”</i> If you’ve emotionally regressed to age 8, breathe in and out and notice when you’re age 10, breathe in then age 18, and breathe until you’re your actual age.
Q	<i>Quieting your mind is a goal of grounding.</i> Once the right hemisphere of your brain is calmer, allow your left hemisphere to “brainstorm” logical options and solutions for your stressors.
R	<i>Read, re-read or read out loud a favorite verse,</i> or say the Serenity Prayer repeatedly to connect with your Higher Power and to provide yourself with inspiring thoughts and positive messages.
S	<i>Speak softly to yourself and tell yourself you’re safe.</i> Start by saying your name, what day it is, where you are, that you are safe, and that you’ll be all right given your current circumstance.
T	<i>Take a “Time Out to Take a Time In”</i> and describe your “safe place” that you’re able to access anytime. Hear the waves, feel the sun on your skin, and notice the grains of sand in your hands.
U	<i>“Upload” and practice grounding techniques frequently,</i> to create neural connections and new “defaults” to behaviors that ground you (remember, the cells that fire together wire together!).
V	<i>Visualize the last time you took a walk in a park.</i> Verbalize in great detail what your senses took in. Describe the landscape, the colors, the temperature, who was there, and the sounds heard.
W	<i>Walk, breathe, talk, repeat.</i> Take a walk and notice your left and then right foot touching the ground. Inhale and exhale as you pace yourself, then say kind words to yourself. Repeat often!
X	<i>“Xtra” work provides plentiful returns</i> on your investment in grounding activities! Take some time to view the links below and add them to your grounding box if you deem them helpful.
Y	<i>Yoda or any “wise” person in your life</i> is available to meet and consult with you in your safe place, to provide wisdom, encouragement, counsel, guidance, direction, peace and support!
Z	<i>Zero in on people who loved you unconditionally.</i> Visualize being in their presence and what they said to you, or did that made you feel loved, accepted, valuable, important or comforted.

Bonus Resources:

1. Visit www.projectenergise.com to download 26 printable grounding worksheets.
2. Visit Dr. Sarah Allen's website (www.drsarahallen.com) to download her free PDF books "Simple Steps to overcome anxiety and worrying" and "Simple Steps to overcome depression."
3. Watch "Grounding Techniques for PTSD" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PeO5fqHdU08>
4. Practice this Progressive Muscle Relaxation - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_duhPeToOfA