# What is Grounding?

Grounding is a self-soothing skill used when you are dealing with stress, anxiety or overwhelming feelings. It allows you to bring attention into your body, calm your nervous system, and be present.

## Benefits of Grounding

- **Reduces anxiety and stress** by shifting focus from distressing thoughts to physical sensations, which anchor you.
- **Enhances emotional regulation** through deeper awareness of your emotional states.
- **Encourages relaxation** and reduction of physical stress or anxiety.



## Making the Most Out of Grounding

### Practice

If you become familiar with a grounding exercise *before* you need it, it may be easier and take less effort when you want to use it in a stressful moment.

### Check In With Yourself

Before and after using a grounding technique, rate how distressed you are before and after grounding. Did it decrease? If not, did another technique work better for you?

### Incorporate Into Your Life

Schedule grounding times for yourself during the week or connect a technique to something you already do, like taking deep breaths when stuck at a traffic light.

### Avoid Assigning Value

When grounding yourself by noticing things in the environment, avoid thinking about how you feel about them, focusing instead on simply describing your surroundings.

# Grounding Techniques

## Calm Your Body



Helps calm your body's stress response and bring your attention back to the present moment.

### 4-7-8 Breathing Exercise

Inhale for a count of four, hold your breath for a count of seven, and exhale for a count of eight, focusing on the sensation of air entering and exiting your body.

### Body Scan

Pay close attention to different parts of your body from head to toe. Bring awareness to each part of your body, noticing any sensations, discomfort or tension.

### Mindful Movement

Focus on the feeling of your body moving, the movements themselves and your muscles stretching. This could be part of a yoga or tai chi practice.

## Connect with the Present



Helps shift your focus away from stressful thoughts by connecting with your senses and surroundings.

### 5,4,3,2,1 Method

Name 5 things you can see, 4 things you can feel, 3 you can hear, 2 you can smell and 1 you can taste.

### Grounding Object

Hold a grounding object (i.e. stones, crystals, textured items) in your hand and focus on the texture or the weight of the object.

### Listen to Music

Put on your favourite song and focus on the lyrics or the melody; pretend you are listening to it for the first time. Choose a soothing song and breathe with it to relax your breathing.

## Refocus Your Mind



Helps interrupt difficult thoughts and create a greater sense of calm and control.

### Anchoring Statement

Remind yourself of your name, age, the current date, or use statements that challenge the distressing thought to remind yourself your thoughts aren't always true.

### Visualization

Imagine roots growing out of the soles of your feet into the earth, or imagine yourself in a place that is peaceful or safe to you. Immerse yourself in the sensory details of that environment.

Looking for more support? If you'd like to talk to someone, support is available through Wellness & Well-Being. Visit **uwo.ca/health**.