

Returning to Self: 32 Grounding Practices

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Body-Based Grounding Techniques

1. **Deep Belly Breathing:** Inhale deeply through your nose for 4 counts, hold for 4 counts, exhale through your mouth for 6 counts. Repeat.
 2. **Progressive Muscle Relaxation:** Tense each muscle group in your body (e.g., feet, legs, hands, shoulders), hold for 5 seconds, and release slowly.
 3. **Grounding Touch:** Place your hands over your heart or belly and focus on the warmth and pressure of your hands.
 4. **Cold Water Splash:** Splash cold water on your face or hold an ice cube to shift your focus to physical sensations.
 5. **Five-Sense Check-In:** Name:
 - 5 things you can see.
 - 4 things you can touch.
 - 3 things you can hear.
 - 2 things you can smell.
 - 1 thing you can taste.
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Mind-Based Grounding Techniques

6. **Count Backward:** Start at 100 and count backward by 7s (or any other number that requires focus).
 7. **Alphabet Game:** Choose a category (e.g., animals, foods) and name something for each letter of the alphabet.
 8. **Mantras or Affirmations:** Silently repeat grounding phrases like:
 - “I am safe in this moment.”
 - “This feeling will pass.”
 9. **Visualize a Safe Place:** Close your eyes and imagine a place where you feel calm and secure. Use as much sensory detail as possible.
 10. **Mindful Observation:** Pick an object around you and study it carefully—notice its texture, color, shape, and details.
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Movement-Based Grounding Techniques

11. **Gentle Walking:** Walk slowly, paying attention to how your feet feel as they touch the ground.
 12. **Stretching:** Focus on slow, deliberate stretches to release tension.
 13. **Shake It Out:** Gently shake your arms, legs, and torso to release built-up energy.
 14. **Chair Push-Ups:** If seated, place your hands on the sides of your chair and gently push up and down to engage your muscles.
 15. **Rocking Motion:** Sit in a chair and gently rock back and forth for soothing movement.
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Engage the Senses

16. **Essential Oils:** Smell calming scents like lavender or peppermint to refocus your mind.
 17. **Weighted Blanket or Object:** Place a weighted object on your lap or shoulders to create a feeling of security.
 18. **Soothing Music:** Play calming or familiar music and focus on the melody and lyrics.
 19. **Taste Something Grounding:** Eat or drink something slowly, like tea, fruit, or chocolate, while focusing on the flavor and texture.
 20. **Touch Textures:** Hold something with an interesting texture (e.g., a soft blanket, smooth stone, or stress ball).
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Grounding with Nature

21. **Feet on the Ground:** If possible, stand or sit barefoot on grass, sand, or dirt to connect with the earth.
 22. **Nature Visualization:** Imagine roots growing from your feet deep into the ground, anchoring you.
 23. **Plant or Sky Observation:** Focus on a tree, flower, or the clouds in the sky, noting the details and patterns.
 24. **Breathe Fresh Air:** Step outside and take slow, intentional breaths while focusing on the sensations of the air on your skin.
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Internal Grounding Techniques

25. **Journal Your Thoughts:** Write down what you're feeling to externalize your anxiety.
26. **Name the Emotion:** Identify and name the emotion you're experiencing (e.g., "This is anxiety", "Hello, anxiety").
27. **Gratitude Practice:** List 3 things you're grateful for in the moment.
28. **Inner Child Comfort:** Imagine comforting a younger version of yourself with words of kindness.

29. **Parts Dialogue:** If you feel anxious, connect with that part of yourself and ask, “What do you need from me right now?”
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Engage in Creative Expression

30. **Doodle or Draw:** Use simple shapes or free-flowing designs to release tension.
31. **Write a Letter:** Write to your emotion as if it's a part of you, expressing understanding and compassion.
32. **Crafting or Knitting:** Focus on a creative, repetitive task to stay present.