



# Grounding techniques



Grounding techniques are useful for settling ourselves when we're feeling overwhelmed. If you find yourself stuck with a strong emotion, these simple and powerful techniques take just a few minutes and can be practiced at any time. They can help you to feel anchored in the present and restore balance in your body and mind.



## Grounding skills can be divided into two specific approaches: Sensory Awareness and Cognitive Awareness

### Sensory Awareness grounding exercise are about filling your awareness with the sensory experience

- Keep your eyes open, look around the room, notice your surroundings, notice details.
- Hold a pillow, stuffed animal or a ball.
- Place a cool cloth on your face, or hold something cool such as a can of soda.
- Listen to soothing music
- Put your feet firmly on the ground.
- FOCUS on someone's voice or a neutral conversation.
- Name one good thing about yourself.

### Cognitive Awareness grounding exercise

Re-orient yourself in place and time by asking yourself some or all of these questions:

1. Where am I?
2. What is today?
3. What is the date?
4. What is the month?
5. What is the year?
6. How old am I?
7. What season is it?



## Other activities you can try

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Practice these techniques while you're feeling calm, so you're ready to use them during times of stress.

### **5, 4, 3, 2, 1**

Look around the room and name five things you can see, then five things you can hear, then five things you can feel. Repeat the exercise by finding four new things, then three, two and one thing.

### **Naming categories**

Choose a category (e.g. colours, shapes, textures), then look around the room and name all of the things you can see in that category.

### **Cold water**

Have a few slow sips of cold water, feeling the sensation of the cold water in your mouth and notice the sensation as you swallow.

### **Counting**

Count backwards from 20.

### **Notice your breath**

Take a deep breath and as you exhale, imagine breathing out strongly through the soles of your feet. Feel the connection of your feet with the floor. Do this three times.

### **Five senses**

Try to notice something with each of your five senses: sight, sound, smell, taste and touch.

### **Connect with the chair**

Sit down and draw your attention to how your body connects with the chair – the way that it supports your weight, and the places where your body makes contact with it.

### **Three items**

Look around the room and choose three items. Describe them to yourself in detail, including the colour, texture, shape, uses of the item and where you think it might have originated.

### **Focus on sounds**

Listen carefully and name all the sounds that you can hear around you.

### **Special item**

Keep a small item in your pocket (such as a stone) and hold the item. Bring your attention to the sensation of the item in your hand, including its weight and texture.

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## Counselling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

+61 2 8627 8433  
caps.admin@sydney.edu.au  
[sydney.edu.au/counselling](https://sydney.edu.au/counselling)

Level 5, Jane Foss Russell Building  
Opening hours: 9am to 4.30pm,  
Monday to Friday

### **Crisis contacts**

Ambulance/Fire/Police: 000  
Lifeline (24 hours): 13 11 14  
Mental Health Access Line: 1800 011 511