



Grounding Activities

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Grounding activities regulate your nervous system so you can increase your bandwidth for stress and emotional load, discharge what has been absorbed throughout the day, and be more present for connection which increases resilience.

Create a dedicated sanctuary in your home or office where you can sit or lie undisturbed and slowly unwind. Candles, a journal, pillows, photos, personal items, headphones, ear plugs, affirmations, stones, plants, or smells. Think activation of sensory experiences in a calming way.

- A solo intentional walk in a quiet, natural place (don't bring work with you).
- 10 minutes standing in the backyard with a warm drink to reset (slow exhales).
- A few minutes to sit quietly and focus on your breath; inhale calm and exhale tension.
- 20 minutes of dance, yoga, or tai chi in your own comfortable space.
- Lie or sit down in a quiet room with subdued lighting. Meditate or listen to a calming song to release mental chatter.
- Spend time looking at meaningful photos or serene landscapes that elicit calm and go there in your mind by evoking the sensory experience of that place.
- Get a morning reader or poems and supportive messages to start and/or end your work day.
- Support a meaningful spiritual practice.
- Get outside for sunrise or sunset. Watch the clouds and let your senses settle into the moment.
- Create a calming playlist with whale sounds, bird songs, the sound of the ocean, or other sounds that you find calming to your nervous system.
- A few moments to be alone with a hand on your chest and relaxed shoulders.
- Enjoying a piece of chocolate with eyes closed and giving gratitude for the moment.
- Give and receive an extended hug, and focus on feeling each other's breath and heart rate.
- Stand barefoot in the sand, grass, or soil to ground into the outdoors, and take deep inhales and slow exhales.
- 15-20 minutes in the morning or after work with a journal to express your thoughts and feelings.
- A gift to self: favorite chocolate, book, candles, photos of happy memories, a few notes written to self about your self-worth or something you appreciate about yourself.

Recognizing emotions: notice what you feel without pushing it away, name it, and relax your body. **Accept:** open your mind to the emotion and give yourself permission to feel it. Try not to judge it as good or bad and just notice it. **Examine:** view the emotion with curiosity. Is the emotion affecting you physically? Is your breath shallow or your shoulders tight? **Observe:** see the emotion for what it is; an emotion that can be observed, recognized and accepted as part of the human experience. Ways to tackle the over-active, hyper-critical, or stressed brain:

- Get curious about the feelings under the thoughts. Ask yourself, where is this coming from?
- Recognize your internal self-talk “are you being critical or supportive of yourself?”
- Radical acceptance of what you cannot control. Fighting against something out of your control only brings stress and suffering.
- Journal: when you notice your thoughts spiraling. Writing is emotional processing
- Use your energy wisely; anxious energy can feel like a surge in your body. It can be employed by going out for a walk, run or cycle instead of being used for overthinking and catastrophizing.

Create a boundary: Practicing meditation daily encourages the observation of thoughts without judgment. Saying “Stop,” or something equivalent internally or out loud can interrupt or prevent the flow of thoughts.

- For someone with an overly active nervous system, a regular day can become quickly overwhelming. Quiet down time allows our brains to process the information from the day and give the nervous system time to relax
- In the moment of a stressful moment: Yawn big, stretch arms overhead then tickle the inside of your arms to register your felt sense and take you out of your thinking brain and into your body.
- Remember the more time your body spends in the parasympathetic state, the more your body’s own healing capabilities are turned on.
- Make home within yourself!