

The
Mental Wealth Co.

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The Grounding Toolkit

Five practices to help you come back to the present moment.

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Hello,

When our nervous system is activated — whether from anxiety, stress, a hard conversation, or a memory that surfaced without warning — grounding is a way to gently remind ourselves that we are here, now, and safe enough in this present moment.

Grounding does not make hard feelings disappear. It does not solve the situation that's stressing you out. What it does, reliably, is bring you back into contact with your body and the room around you. From that steadier place, it becomes easier to think, choose, and respond.

This toolkit walks through five grounding practices I've watched work — for myself, for clients, and for people in a lot of different life circumstances. Try each of them at least once when you're calm, so they're familiar when you actually need them.

— *Jasmine*

Founder, The Mental Wealth Co. · LPC, NCC

When grounding is (and isn't) the right tool

Grounding tends to help when...

- You feel anxious, overwhelmed, or spinning.
- You're dissociating or feel far away from your body.
- You've been triggered by a memory or reminder.
- You're about to face something hard and need a minute first.
- You've just been through something hard and need to come back.

Grounding is not...

- A treatment for a mental health condition.
- A substitute for professional support when you're struggling.
- Something you're doing wrong if it doesn't immediately calm you.

Think of grounding as a bridge back to yourself — not a destination. Its job is to help you get steady enough to take the next small step.

1 • 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding

This practice uses your senses to bring your attention back into the present moment. It's quiet, portable, and works almost anywhere.

How to practice it

- Notice 5 things you can see. Look for detail — colors, shapes, edges.
- Notice 4 things you can feel. Feet on the floor, fabric on your skin, temperature of the air.
- Notice 3 things you can hear. Near sounds and far sounds.
- Notice 2 things you can smell — or two things you like the smell of.
- Notice 1 thing you can taste, or one thing you'd like to taste.

One small tip

The goal isn't a perfect list. The goal is attention shifting from thought to sense.

2 · Paced Breathing (4–6)

When we're anxious, our exhale often shortens. Lengthening the exhale gently signals safety to the nervous system.

How to practice it

- Breathe in slowly through your nose for a count of 4.
- Breathe out slowly through your mouth for a count of 6.
- Let the exhale be soft — like fogging a mirror.
- Repeat for 6–10 rounds, or until you feel a small shift.

One small tip

If 4–6 feels too long, try 3–4. The specific numbers matter less than making the exhale longer than the inhale.

3 · Body Scan

A body scan brings your attention through your body slowly, without trying to change anything. Simply noticing what's there is the practice.

How to practice it

- Sit or lie down comfortably. Close your eyes if that feels okay.
- Start at the top of your head. Notice any sensations — temperature, tension, nothing at all.
- Move slowly downward: face, jaw, shoulders, chest, belly, hips, legs, feet.
- For each area, breathe once and simply notice. Don't fix.
- When you reach your feet, take one full breath before opening your eyes.

One small tip

You are not looking for anything in particular. You are practicing being with what is.

4 · Temperature & Sensory Grounding

A sharp sensory input — cold, texture, smell — can quickly interrupt a spiral and pull attention back into the body.

How to practice it

- Splash cold water on your face, or hold a cold drink to your cheeks.
- Rub your palms together until they feel warm; place them on your eyes.
- Hold an object with strong texture (a stone, a key, a piece of ice).
- Smell something distinct — coffee grounds, citrus peel, an essential oil.

One small tip

Cold on the face activates the mammalian dive reflex, which naturally slows the heart rate. Your body already knows how to do this.

5 · Orienting to the Room

Orienting is what animals — and humans — do naturally when a threat has passed. It's a slow visual sweep of your environment that helps signal, 'I am here, and I am safe enough right now.'

How to practice it

- Slowly turn your head from left to right, letting your eyes lead.
- As your gaze moves, name what you see out loud: 'window, plant, wall, book.'
- Notice one thing in the room that you find beautiful, calming, or funny.
- Take one intentional breath before returning to whatever you were doing.

One small tip

This practice is especially helpful after a hard conversation, meeting, or memory.

Build your grounding kit

Choose the practices that felt most doable and put them somewhere you'll actually see them — the notes app on your phone, a card in your wallet, a sticky note by your desk.

Which practice felt most natural to me?

Where and when might I use it this week?

One small physical object I can keep nearby to remind me:

A phrase I can say to myself: 'I'm here. I'm okay enough for right now.'

Someone I can text if grounding isn't enough on its own:

A gentle note.

This resource was created by The Mental Wealth Co. for educational and informational purposes only. It is not a substitute for individualized mental health care, diagnosis, or treatment, and using it does not create a therapist-client relationship.

If you are working with a therapist or clinician, consider bringing this resource into your work together so they can help you apply it to your specific situation.

If you are experiencing a mental health emergency, please call 911 or contact your local crisis resource. In the United States, you can also dial or text 988 to reach the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.

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With warmth,
The Mental Wealth Co.