



Grounding techniques or exercises are practical steps you can take which can help if you are experiencing panicky feelings, flashbacks or a feeling of detachment. They can also be useful in managing overwhelming feelings and intense anxiety or emotion. The aim of these techniques is to help 'ground' you back in the safety of the present moment, reorienting yourself into the here and now. They can be really useful as a way to support yourself when you first notice the signs that you are feeling overwhelmed in some way.

Refocus your attention:

Concentrate really hard on something in your environment using your five senses: the colours, shapes and textures of objects around you (e.g. the feel of the arms of a chair, your feet on the ground, the titles of books on a shelf, the colours and shape of objects). Describe these things to yourself in detail.

Remind yourself of who and where you are:

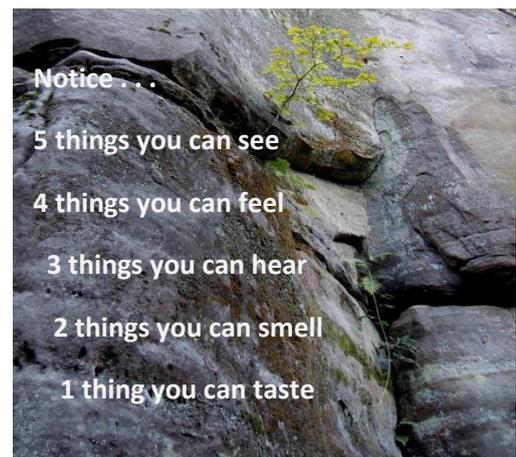
Say your name - your age now - where you are now - what you have done today - what you going to do next. Look around you and notice your surroundings.

If you wake during the night, say from a nightmare, you could tell yourself who you are and where you are. What year is it, what age are you now? Look around the room and notice familiar objects and name them. Feel the bed you are lying on, the warmth or coolness of the air, and notice any sounds you hear.

Get physical and in touch with your body:

Find a way to physically hold yourself or move.

Get up and walk around, really notice your feet on the ground, the rhythm of your stride, notice each step as you take one after another. Rub your hands together. Hear the noise and feel the sensation in your hands and arms. Experiment with finding a supportive movement or way to hold or hug yourself e.g. placing a hand over your heart or feeling the warmth of your hands.



Carrying an object:

Find a small object that is comforting in some way you can carry around with you. Hold, feel or squeeze the object to help anchor you in the present. Examples of objects might be a small smooth stone, a crystal, a stress ball or something soft.

Use of smell:

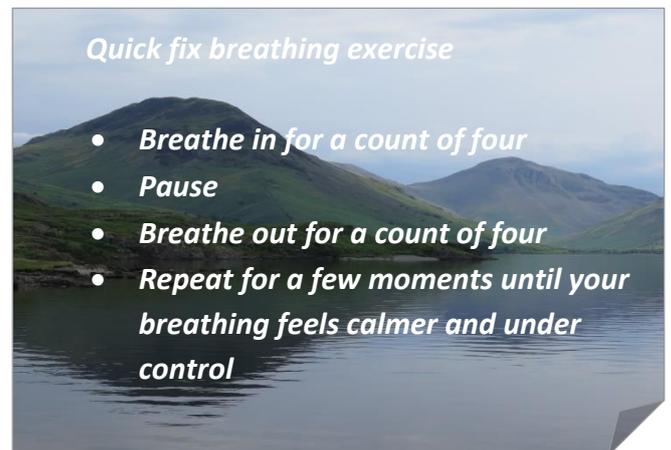
Smell can be powerful way to focus. Find a smell that has positive associations for you. You could also carry this with you in a small bottle of essential oils, or on a tissue, dried flowers

Grounding statement or phrase:

Write down an encouraging statement to read when you notice becoming upset or panicky. Think of encouraging statements that will help remind you are safe and can move through the feelings you are experiencing. Some people prefer a picture or photo.

Breathing:

When we are anxious or feeling panicky breathing tends to get faster, shallower and 'up in the chest' Slowing and relaxing our breath can help us feel better. Relax your shoulders down and then focus on getting a nice steady rhythm, breathing from your belly.

**Trauma Self Help Tapping Technique**

An Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) which involves tapping with fingers on acupuncture points. Instructions can be found at [Self Help for Trauma](#).

Different strategies work for different people and at different times. There are many possibilities that can be explored to find out what 'works' for you. Practising the techniques when you are feeling okay can help develop confidence in using them.

Information written and compiled by Anne Crump (Updated March 2019).