

Grounding Techniques Using the Body and Breath

Grounding is an important concept when it comes to wellness. When we spend too much time thinking or worrying, our energy moves upward. We may feel scattered, flighty, agitated, and unclear. The act of grounding helps us focus our energy into our bodies and into the earth.

Feet are useful tools for facilitating grounding. They are a long way down from our thinking minds and we can connect our feet into the earth. Try standing with feet planted, hip distance apart (this promotes stability). You might want to take your shoes and socks off. Bring awareness to your feet as you press them down firmly.

Try the following:

- Imagine you are growing roots through your feet and you are sending them down from the soles of your feet, through the floor, deep into the centre of the earth. Feel plugged into the centre of the earth. Feel the effect of gravity while also growing tall through the crown of your head. As you breath out, send the exhale all the way down to your feet which are tethering you to the solid earth.
- Rock back and forth on your feet while maintaining a strong stable core.
- Inhale and rise to the balls of your feet. As you exhale thump your heels down heavily making sure not to lock the knees. You could also sound Haaaa through the mouth as you thump your heels down. Repeat several times and then pause, notice, and feel the effects.
- Stand on one foot, pick up the other foot and roll a ball (perhaps a golf ball) under your foot, pressing down as hard as you wish. Do the other side. Stand with both feet on the ground and notice both feet.
- Sit on the floor in cobbler's pose (legs in a diamond shape). Sit up on something like a blanket if your hips are tight. Gaze at your feet, massage them - you could apply essential oil. Interweave your fingers between your toes creating space.

- Sit on floor with knees bent and your hands and arms supporting you behind your back. Start to stamp your feet. Make sound. Stamp as loud as you can. Go as fast or as slow as you wish. Stop and then pause, notice and feel.
- Thunderbolt Pose - Kneel and tuck all ten toes under and try to fan and spread your toes. Sit your hips back over your heels if possible. If this is too intense, place a block or a book under your knees to modify. Invite the torso to be long and tall. Breathe. Exit pose and come into table-top position (all fours) and tap tops of feet on the ground.

Standing Poses in Yoga are considered to be grounding. These poses build strength and stability in the legs. Here are some basic ones to try:

- Warrior 1 and Warrior 2
- Chair pose
- Tree Pose - we need to be present to balance
- Forward Fold - with knees slightly bent, sway your torso, shake your head gently, exhale loudly through the mouth. Let out any sounds that feel natural. Push down with your feet, draw navel towards the spine and slowly come back to standing.

Other Poses to Try

- Child's Pose - people often find this shape to be soothing and calming. It is contained and close to the earth.
- Bridge pose - practice really standing into your feet.
- Squating - close to the ground and is strengthening for feet and ankles.
- Savasana or Corpse Pose - try placing a heavy blanket over your body. You could also try putting a sandbag or a heavy book on your belly. Weight on the body may be experienced as grounding. Feel the effect of gravity. You could try listening to a recorded *body scan*.

Breathing to Try

- 4:4 ratio breathing. Inhale for 4 beats and exhale for 4 beats. Make the inhale and exhale the same length. Change the ratio if you need to and make it work for you.
- 4:6 ratio breathing. Inhale for 4 beats and exhale for 6 beats. Let the exhale feel like a sigh. Make the ratio work for you.

Other Ideas

- Take a warm shower and feel the water on your skin
- Listen to soothing music
- Take yourself into nature and engage your senses
- Walk mindfully while feeling your feet on the earth
- Seek out support from a trusted other
- If you have a pet, sit with your pet and stroke it's fur
- Look around you and notice: three things you can see, two things can you hear and one thing you can feel (clothes on your skin)
- Try resting - slow everything down
- Offer yourself compassion and a comforting phrase such as, I am having a difficult time and I am doing the best that I can or, this will pass.