

Grounding vs. Relaxation

“The goal of relaxation is to calm us, while the *goal of grounding is to engage our senses to direct us back to the present*. In effect, grounding techniques help us to occupy our minds in a non-destructive way... They also allow us to find a balance between feeling cut off from our emotions and being overwhelmed by them when something triggers memories of trauma.”

<https://healingwellcounseling.com/blog/grounding-techniques/>

Grounding Breathing Exercises:

Breathing Technique: Diaphragmatic Breathing

Instructions: Place one hand on your chest and one hand over your belly button. Try to breathe so that only the hand on your belly button moves.

Diaphragmatic breathing is a useful technique to promote deep breathing and it can be very helpful for returning the body to a more calm state after hyperventilation. This technique, first off, gives the person an awareness of their own breathing. The hand that rests on the chest monitors for quick shallow breaths as these cause the upper chest to puff up. The hand on the belly button monitors for deep breaths that push air further into the body. Focus on taking breaths that move the belly-button hand and not the chest-hand. These breaths will be full deep breaths that can help the body return to a more calm state. This technique also can be useful as a personal check in; if a person is busy doing things and notices that their chest-hand is moving, they could consider taking a moment to focus on their breathing.

Breathing Technique: Box Breathing

Instructions: Use a finger to draw a square in the air. Time each side to take 5 seconds to draw. While drawing the first side, inhale. Hold

your breath while you draw the next side. Exhale while drawing the third side. And hold your breath while drawing the last side. Then start again, making sure that each inhalation, exhalation, and holding is being done for at least five seconds.

This technique can be helpful for both getting to a slower breathing rate and for maintaining a calm breathing rate. It is similar to many other breathing exercises in that it provides a set time for inhalation, holding and exhalation. This kind of technique offers a structure to breathing and this can be a big help. It is probably helpful to have a watch or clock around to help stick to 5 seconds.

Nadi Shodhan pranayama (Alternate Nostril Breathing)

[This video](#) explains the process.

Follow your breath

In this technique, you will intentionally focus on your breathing. Your aim is to maintain your focus on controlled inhalation and exhalation and to count your breaths. This technique sounds easy, but it is surprisingly tricky!

- Try to find the exact moment at which your inhalation begins and ends.
- Try to find the exact moment at which your exhalation begins and ends.
- Continuously track these start and endpoints with equal concentration and attention.

Tactical breathing

Tactical breathing, made famous by the use of US Navy Seals, is easy to try. Here's the step-by-step process:

Grounding Exercises

- Breathe in slowly through your nose for a count of four.
- Hold your breath for a count of four.
- Exhale slowly through your mouth for a count of four.
- Hold for a count of four.
- Repeat 3-5 times, visualizing each number as you count.