



# **MENTAL GROUNDING TECHNIQUES**

***3 EVIDENCE-BASED TECHNIQUES FOR REDUCING  
ANXIETY, DISTRESS, AND INTRUSIVE THOUGHTS***

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# **SPIRITUAL FIRST AID™**

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# INTRODUCTION

**In times of stress, anxiety, or emotional overwhelm, mental grounding techniques can help anchor us in the present moment, providing clarity and stability.**

These techniques involve using our thoughts, senses, and awareness to shift focus away from distressing emotions or intrusive thoughts, helping us regain control and find peace.

Grounding techniques are particularly helpful for those experiencing anxiety, trauma-related distress, or emotional dysregulation, as they encourage a reflective connection to the present rather than becoming consumed by past regrets or future worries.

Scripture encourages us to renew their minds and fix t thoughts on what is true and stable.

Philippians 4:8 (NIV) reminds us: “Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.”

This passage aligns with the principles of mental grounding by emphasizing the importance of redirecting our thoughts to what is life-giving and constructive.

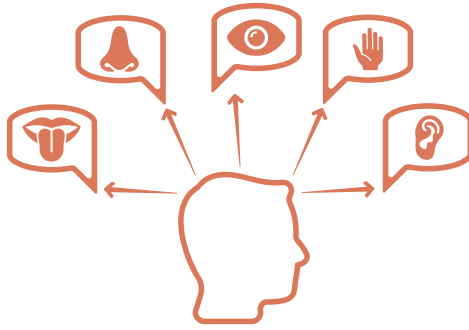
Similarly, Isaiah 26:3 offers reassurance: “You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you.”

These verses highlight the biblical wisdom in managing distressing thoughts through a disciplined and faith-filled mindset, reinforcing the value of mental grounding as both a psychological and spiritual practice.

Research supports the effectiveness of grounding techniques in reducing anxiety and distress by decreasing emotional reactivity and improve emotional regulation.

For example, a study by Seligowski et al. (2015) found that grounding techniques can be particularly beneficial for individuals with PTSD, helping to decrease dissociation and emotional numbing while improving overall well-being.

By combining biblical wisdom with evidence-based strategies, mental grounding techniques offer a practical approach to managing stress and anxiety in a way that aligns with both faith and psychological resilience.



## SENSORY AWARENESS GROUNDING

*Instructions: Find a quiet or comfortable space, but know that you can do this anywhere. Take a slow, deep breath in through your nose, hold for a moment, and exhale slowly through your mouth. Repeat this breathing pattern a few times to prepare your mind for grounding.*

### 1. Sight (What do you see?)

- Look around and name five things you can see.
- Describe their colors, shapes, and textures. Example: “The walls are beige with a smooth finish. The fan blades are spinning slowly.”

### 2. Sound (What do you hear?)

- Listen carefully and identify four different sounds.
- Focus on background noises you might normally ignore. Example: “I can hear the hum of the refrigerator, the ticking of a clock, the faint sound of birds outside, and my own steady breathing.”

### **3. Touch (What do you feel?)**

- Identify three physical sensations on your body or nearby objects.
- Focus on temperature, texture, or pressure. Example: “My chair is firm and slightly cool. My feet are resting on a soft rug. My hands feel warm and relaxed on my lap.”

### **4. Smell (What do you smell?)**

- Identify two different scents in your environment.
- If you don’t notice any smells, take a deep breath and focus on subtle scents. Example: “I can smell fresh coffee from my cup and a hint of soap from my hands.”

### **5. Taste (What do you taste?)**

- Identify one taste in your mouth or take a sip of a drink.
- If you have nothing to taste, focus on the absence of taste. Example: “I taste the mint from my toothpaste” or “My mouth is dry, and I don’t taste anything right now.”

### **6. Reflect and Repeat as Needed**

- Take another deep breath and notice how your body feels after completing the exercise.
- If you still feel distressed, repeat the exercise or focus more deeply on each sense.
- Use this technique whenever you feel overwhelmed to help reorient yourself to the present moment.



## CATEGORY GROUNDING

*Instructions: Find a quiet or comfortable space, but know that you can do this anywhere. Inhale deeply through your nose, hold for a few seconds, and exhale slowly through your mouth. Repeat this breathing pattern a few times to settle your mind.*

### 1. Choose a Category

Pick a broad and familiar category to focus your attention. Some examples include:

- Types of animals (e.g., dogs, birds, reptiles)
- Names of cities or countries
- Foods (e.g., fruits, desserts, international dishes)
- Sports teams or famous athletes
- Movies, books, or songs
- Objects you'd find in a specific place (e.g., kitchen items, things in a car)

## **2. List as Many as You Can**

- Start listing items that fit your chosen category, either out loud or in writing.
- Challenge yourself to name at least 10 items before stopping.
- If you get stuck, switch to a new category and keep going.

## **3. Use Additional Challenges (Optional)**

To deepen the focus and distraction effect, try adding one of these variations:

- Alphabet Challenge: List items in alphabetical order (e.g., apple, banana, cherry).
- Time Limit Challenge: Set a timer for 30–60 seconds and list as many items as possible.
- Memory Recall Challenge: Try recalling items from a favorite childhood game, book, or past experience.

## **4. Reflect and Repeat as Needed**

- Take another deep breath and notice how you feel after completing the exercise.
- If you still feel anxious or overwhelmed, repeat the game with a new category.
- Use this technique anytime you need a quick and effective way to shift focus from distressing thoughts.



## SAFETY STATEMENT GROUNDING

*Instructions: Find a quiet place or a moment where you can focus. Take a deep breath in through your nose, hold for a moment, and slowly exhale through your mouth. Repeat this breathing pattern a few times to settle your thoughts.*

### 1. Say a Safety Statement Out Loud

Speak a grounding statement clearly to yourself. Some examples include:

- Basic Safety Statement: “My name is [your name]. I am safe right now. I am in [current location]. Today is [current date].”
- Faith-Based Safety Statement: “I am a child of God. I am loved and never alone. God is with me in this moment.” (Psalm 46:1, NIV: “God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.”)
- Personalized Safety Statement: “I am in control of this moment. My body is strong, my mind is clear, and I am safe.”

## **2. Repeat and Personalize**

- Say your safety statement at least three times, speaking slowly and intentionally.
- If it helps, place your hand over your heart or another grounding touch, like holding an object that brings comfort (e.g., a cross, a smooth stone, or fabric).
- Adjust the wording to fit what feels most reassuring to you.

## **3. Reflect and Repeat as Needed**

- Notice how you feel after completing the exercise.
- If anxious thoughts persist, repeat your safety statement or pair it with a short prayer for added reassurance.
- Use this technique as often as needed to calm your mind and strengthen your sense of security.

# CONCLUSION

Mental grounding techniques provide simple yet powerful ways to calm the mind, regain control, and reconnect with the present moment.

Whether through sensory awareness, mental engagement with categories, or affirming safety statements, these practices help reduce stress and anxiety while fostering emotional resilience.

Research supports their effectiveness in regulating emotions, managing intrusive thoughts, and promoting a sense of stability.

As Psalm 46:1 reminds us, “God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.”

Whenever you feel overwhelmed, remember that you are not alone—through these grounding techniques and God’s presence, you can find strength and peace in any situation.

## Reference

Seligowski, A. V., Lee, D. J., Bardeen, J. R., & Orcutt, H. K. (2015). Emotion regulation and posttraumatic stress symptoms: A meta-analysis. *Cognitive Therapy and Research*, 39(5), 572-585.  
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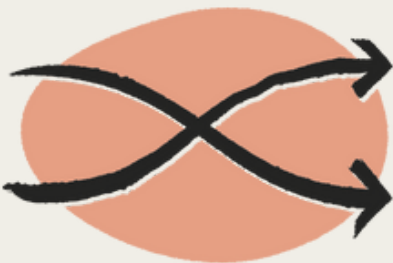
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