

Mindfulness and Grounding

Mindfulness (M) is performed by focusing one's awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging, accepting, and being with one's feelings, senses, thoughts, and body sensations, without judgment. Mindfulness can often induce relaxation. A regular practice of mindfulness has a whole host of physical and emotional benefits including building distress tolerance (physical and emotional) so that the body does not slip so readily into the fight – flight – freeze response.

Grounding (G) techniques are to be used when triggered. They are used to control symptoms by turning the attention away from emotion, cravings, thoughts, memories, or worries, and refocusing attention on the present moment. Grounding is used when either feeling too much (overwhelming emotions and memories) or too little (numbing and dissociation). The idea is to manage your thoughts and experience toward safety, which is different than mindfulness. The aim, in this case, is to diminish the fight – flight – freeze response when activated or triggered.

Many of the mindfulness (M) and grounding (G) techniques seem similar but vary by whether the intent is to accept and be with difficult feelings and sensations (mindfulness) or manage them to induce a sense of safety (grounding).

Mindfulness (M) and Grounding (G)

Use of scents

Be present (in here-and-now)

Experience each sense (see, feel, hear, smell, taste)

Mindful walking

Observe environment in detail

Observe shades of colors in environment

Notice breathing

Mindful eating or drinking

Mindful listening

Do an activity mindfully (dishes, hiking, etc.)

Focus on details of single object

[Breathing exercises](#)

Mindfulness (M)

Self-led or [guided mindfulness meditation](#)

Self-led or [guided body scan](#)

Notice thoughts

Observe and/or experience emotion

Sit with uncomfortable body sensations

Grounding (G)

Use ice packs on body, notice sensation

Read something backwards

Shower in warm or cool water

Describe environment in detail

Imagine safe, peaceful, or beautiful place

Carry grounding object in pocket

Say coping statement (i.e. "I am safe")

Notice safety in present moment

Press feet or heels into floor

Focus on neutral or grounded part of body

Describe an activity in detail (i.e. checkers, etc.)

Observe appealing item in environment

Recall safe/loving person from past or present

4-7-8 Breathing

Squeeze hands hard, notice the sensation

Tapping on body

Place weighted blanket or object on body

Seek out safe place

Seek out safe people or pet