

10 COPING STRATEGIES

When You Have Lost
Your Center And
Feel Ungrounded

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Introduction

Staying grounded when we are faced with troublesome or unexpected situations is a practice that can help keep us connected to reality and to the positive elements found in all situations. Many people have heard of the term “grounded” but it can be an elusive practice if it is recommended without instruction or detail.

Essentially, grounding meaning connecting to the Earth and to a safe space within us that is always secure and central to our being. When we connect with our center, we are consolidating our energy and are coming to our most core essence and self. Centering ourselves can help us to deal with emotions that seem overwhelming.

When we are overwhelmed, our nervous system responds by sending out chemicals that result in us feeling a sense of stress.

When we experience stress, we may experience anxiety, racing thoughts, a rapid heartbeat, sweating and other stress responses. This reaction often comes from an acute, sudden, and unexpected incident or trigger that brings a rise of adrenaline and other reactions in the body.

Other times, the stressor is more chronic and longstanding, like a difficult work or family relationship. These stressors can build over time or can last for a long time under the surface causing low grade stress and anxiety and sometimes even resentment, anger, and other upsetting emotions. In this instance, we may not experience the racing heart or stomach upset, but instead experience ongoing anxiety and stress reactions in the body which knocks us off our center.

We don't always have control over the situations we encounter, but we do always have control over the way we react to situations as they arise in our environment. When we enter a situation that is difficult, we may lose our center and feel ungrounded.



Coming back to center and grounding into the support of the Earth allows us to come back to a place of greater clarity and peace. It isn't ideal to make decisions or take action when we are super stressed, and if we don't take time to think through our actions, we can sometimes regret things we said or did in the heat of the moment.

Instead of popping off without warning, we can initiate a practice of centering and grounding so we can make a conscious and self-aware decision that is in the best interest of all.



Being Centered And Grounded

If you're still not clear on what it means or feels like to be centered and grounded, that's okay. truthfully, the definition of this experience will be unique to you and will be different for each person.

As you continue to practice, you will get to know yourself and your reactions better and better, and you will be able to assess how centered you are at any given time. Even better, you will be able to catch yourself when you are feeling ungrounded and off center.

- When you are centered you are acting from the highest and most informed version of yourself. You are making decisions that benefit your highest interest and are also caring and thoughtful of others who are involved with you. You feel confident in your abilities and are able to act with self-assurance.
- When you are grounded, you feel self-supported and know that you have the ability to care for yourself. You can always reach out for help from community and colleagues but feeling grounded helps you feel secure based on the relationships you have cultivated. Sometimes, these relationships are not even with people!

Some of the most grounding practices involve pets or nature. Anything we can do to nourish ourselves and bring ourselves back to a clear and centered state is a great practice. Grounding and maintaining your center means you enjoy inner peace and are supporting your wellbeing.

10 Coping Strategies To Get Started Grounding and Centering

Breathe

One of the easiest practices to engage in is conscious breathing. When we focus on the breath, we can come back to our bodies and begin to calm the nervous system. This is especially important if we experience a sudden and unexpected situation or trauma that causes our nervous system to engage.

Breathing can be done in a seated position or lying down.

Take time to breath in for a count of 4, hold for a count of 4 and release for 4 seconds. Take care to breathe as deeply as possible.

Most of us breathe into our chests, especially when we are stressed. Instead of breathing only shallowly, we can focus on breathing deeply into our bellies, similarly to how babies and pets breathe.

Breathing regulates the nervous system and is centering and grounding. You may also put your hand onto your belly and feel your body expand as you take in oxygen.



Meditate

If you are able to set a bit of time aside for yourself, meditation can improve clarity and can be a centering exercise that can help you determine your next course of action or receive new revelations about a situation.

Meditation is a practice of quieting the mind and stilling the body. When we sit in meditation, we allow ourselves to take notice of our thoughts. When we can take notice of our thoughts, we can realize our mindset and how our thoughts affect us. If we have negative thoughts, we can ask ourselves whether or not we believe the thoughts we are having are true, and if there is a possibility, they are not true but are instead just thoughts and ideas passing through the mind. We can also reframe our thoughts to be more supportive and meaningful in making positive changes.

Meditation is a practice that we can take to through the many years and seasons of our lives. Meditation can help us clear our minds and create space for a new reality that is constantly emerging and changing.

Break A Sweat

When we break a sweat, our body releases toxins and allows us to feel refreshed. We can then drink fresh and clean water to rehydrate our bodies. When we sweat, we can experience a feeling of stress release and refreshment. Releasing toxins reduces the burden on our liver and allows us to better process foods, minerals and supplements we take in.



When we exercise, we can release feel-good endorphins that elevate our mood for the rest of the day and keep us motivated to carry on with our positive choices. Many people who are active runners will explain the sensation of a “runner’s high” after logging a lot of miles.

This is because of the release of endorphins that the body produces when we exercise. Sweating and exercise is a great way to get the heart pumping and reduce anxiety. There are so many options for exercise, from rock climbing to weight lifting to kickboxing to aerobics.

Some people feel intimidated going to a new exercise class or trying a new workout routine, but if you don't enjoy exercising, you may just need to find an activity you can enjoy even more.

Connect With The Earth

Going for a walk outside is another active way to ground and center and engage with nature. Nature is full of negative ions which can help us ground and manage stress. One of the best practices for grounding involves walking barefoot on the Earth.

If you have access to a beach or patch of grass or a park, you can walk barefoot or simply sit with your feet or hands touching the ground. This practice allows us to see a broader perspective and to connect with the elements of the season. Walking is also an active practice that relieves stress through slow and mindful movement. Spending time in Nature allows us to tap into the subtle seasons of the passage of time, and to appreciate the moments as they pass.



You may also choose to view a plant or a flower or another form of nature that is of special interest to you. Maintaining a garden can be a lovely practice that connects us with the Earth and allows us to bear fruit with our efforts and with the strength of nature.

Stretch

We know exercise and movement is good for us and walking and breaking a sweat are active practices that allow us to get out energy up and out. Another practice of engaging with the body in a calmer nature is to do some simple stretches.

Stretching can be done various ways including lying down, seated, or standing. If you are new to stretching, beginning with subtle stretches that are gentle and awakening are a great place to

start. You may want to do your own series of movements or find a video online to guide you through a gentle series.

You may want to focus on one singular body part or area, like neck and shoulders, hips, or another area that is tight and tense. Stretching is a great way to ground because it improves coordination and allows for body and spatial awareness.

Stretching wakes up the body and deep stretching can even release old emotional energy that is stuck in the body. Take notice of any thoughts or memories that come up when you are stretching.

Emotions can get stuck in certain parts of our bodies and when we stretch and release the muscle tension and knots in certain areas, we can often gain relief psychologically and emotionally as well.

Drink Tea

Drinking a cup of tea or other healthful warm beverage is a mindfulness practice that can allow us to center our thoughts and take a moment of peace for ourselves.



When we drink tea, we experience and undertake an ancient practice of mindfulness that has been practiced by monks and ancestors for thousands of years.

Drinking a tea can be a thoughtful experience as we feel the heat of the mug in our hands and smell the aroma of the brew. We may know where the tea was grown and contemplate the process the tea went through to make it into our mugs.

We may think of the farmers who grew the tea and thank them for their efforts. We may experience warmth in our throats and hearts when we drink the tea and allow it to fill our bellies. Drinking tea is a special way to nourish the body and calm and center the mind and body.

Light A Candle

Since the discovery of fire, the element of fire has been an essential part of existence and innovation. Fire is the source of warmth and it is a sense of comfort and also of change.

Sit and watch the flame flicker. The flickering of a flame is constantly in motion, moving with the wind.

When we light a flame, we are aware of its warmth and color and animation. We can watch how the flame takes on a life of its own while flickering and creating light. We can envision this light guiding us on our journey.



Hold a Crystal, Rock, or a Piece of Ice

When we are feeling ungrounded or uncentered we can hold onto a piece of ice or a rock or a crystal. Holding into something, whether its light or heavy, can allow our hands to engage with an item rather than staying idle.

Holding a piece of ice is centering because it brings our attention to the cold sensation and brings us into our bodies. Holding a crystal or rock is also grounding because it allows us to access nature.



Pet An Animal

Pets are considered to be man's best friend for a reason. Many people who are lonely have found great companionship with animals of all different types. Animals are special and unique creatures that teach us many lessons by their pure existence.

Pets are loving and forgiving and exemplify many of the character traits that humans aspire to have. Petting a dog, cat, or other pet can reduce stress and allow for a sense of relaxation and presence.



Listen To Or Play Music

Listening to music is a centering practice when we listen to music that makes us feel good.

Listening to music is also perfect for calming the mind and when we can't think straight and want to do something that is passive and relaxing.

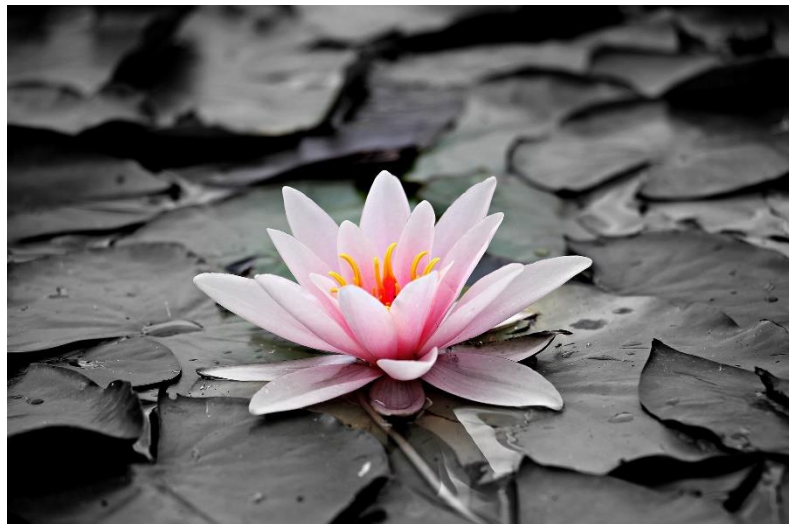
Playing music is an engaging activity that unifies the mind and body. Music has a profound effect on the brain, stimulates the release of feel good chemicals, and can literally alter our mood in minutes.

Begin a centering and grounding practice. Centering involves coming back to the heart of the matter and feeling the true feelings we are experiencing in our hearts.

Final Thoughts

When we feel stressed and overwhelmed, we can begin a centering and grounding practice. Centering involves coming back to the heart of the matter and feeling the true feelings we are experiencing in our hearts.

When we center, we can use the breath or other techniques like meditation to bring our attention to our highest self and the best outlook for our situation. When we feel flustered and confused or like we are traveling in a thousand different directions a million miles an hour, we can come back to our center through implementing the above techniques, so we can reclaim our power within any situation.



Grounding ourselves into nature and the Earth is a great way to experience our strength and adaptability.

When we are in nature, we connect to the cycles and seasons. We may even contact the Earth by sitting, lying, or walking barefoot on the ground. These practices help us engage with a higher order and allow us to absorb vibrational energies from the Earth.

Centering and grounding ourselves in times of stress is a practice that will come in handy throughout our lives. As the old adage says, only change is constant.

When we are thrown off our center due to outside circumstances beyond our choice or control, we often are not able to roll with the punches as well as when we can make a choice for ourselves.

Alas, it is always possible to come to a space of centered groundedness when we implement practices that have helped us in the past or explore new ideas for grounding. We don't need to

continue to spin out of control, but rather can take initiative and take our healing into our own hands.

When we make grounding activities a daily practice, we will surely see healing improvements in our lives.