

Self-care: grounding exercises

We have introduced some exercises called “**grounding exercises**”. We will tell you why grounding exercises may be helpful and then how you can go about starting to practice and use them. After the short introduction you will find 5 different grounding exercises that you can choose from.

Practicing grounding exercises may be helpful and be a part of the recovery and healing process. This does not mean that grounding exercises will “fix everything” and make the pain and other reactions disappear, but they can assist the survivor and give her or him some control back when facing trauma reactions. They can help survivors handling reactions such as acute stress, anxiety, painful memories, pain in the body, fear, anger, lack of energy, lack of willingness to do something, or difficulties falling asleep, for example. Grounding exercises can help you to feel a little bit calmer and to feel that you are present in the here and now. They can also help us to feel more alert, energized and focused.

Grounding exercises can help you to feel more in control of the present moment. They can help you to make choices that are good for you and the people you love, and that support your recovery and healing process. In this way, the exercises can help you to take the first steps to move on in life.

Some points that are useful to think about when practicing grounding exercises:

- Pick a time and place that are as peaceful and safe as possible*
- Make sure you are calm and able to learn something new
- Practice one of the exercises first, and then later maybe add a second and third one
- Practice over and over again, every day, for some time

*We are aware of the fact that some of you may find yourself in situations with continued danger. We hope that you can pick a time and place that seems as safe as possible for you to practice the exercise.

The reason why we advise you to practice the exercise again and again, is that it then can become almost automatic. It can feel very easy for you to do the exercise. When that is the case, you may eventually be able to use exercises to calm yourself even when you are stressed and experiencing flashbacks.

If you are someone close to a survivor and supporting a survivor, we advise you to practice the exercises together, if this is something that the survivor would like to do, until you both feel like it is easy and almost automatic.

It may be helpful to think and/or talk about the following questions before and after doing the exercises in order to see if there is a difference:

- What happens in your body?
- What happens to your feelings?
- What happens to your breathing?
- What happens to your thoughts?
- What happens to your heart?

For more grounding exercises press here: