



SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Mindfulness for Grounding

Mindfulness Exercises You Can Try Today Breathe.

1. One Minute Breathing:

This exercise can be done anywhere at anytime, standing up or sitting down. All you have to do is focus on your breath for just one minute. Start by breathing in and out slowly, holding your breath for a count of six once you've inhaled. Then breathe out slowly, letting the breath flow effortlessly out back into the atmosphere. Naturally your mind will try and wander amidst the valleys of its thoughts, but simply notice these thoughts, let them be for what they are and return to watch your breath. Literally watch your breath with your sense as it enters your body and fills you with life, and then watch it work its way up and out of your body as the energy dissipates into the universe. If you're someone who thought they'd never be able to meditate, guess what? You're half way there already!

2. Simple Grounding Technique

- Place both feet flat on the floor.
- Lean back into your chair, and make note of the feeling of the chair under you and against your back.
- Cross your arms over your chest.
- Gently tap your shoulders, alternating one side at a time.
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Alternatively, you can place your hands on your thighs if you are in public, tapping one leg at a time. Although not as effective as shoulder tapping, this technique can still calm you down.

3. 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Exercise

The "54321 game" is a common sensory awareness grounding exercise that many find a helpful tool to relax or get through difficult moments.

1. Describe 5 things you see in the room.
2. Name 4 things you can feel ("my feet on the floor" or "the air in my nose")
3. Name 3 things you hear right now ("traffic outside")
4. Name 2 things you can smell right now (or 2 smells you like)

4. Mindful Observation

This exercise is simple but incredibly powerful. It is designed to connect us with the beauty of the natural environment, which is easily missed when we're rushing around. Pick a natural organism within your immediate environment and focus on watching it for a minute or two. This

could be a flower or an insect, the clouds or the moon. Don't do anything except notice the thing you are looking at. But really notice it. Look at it as you are seeing it for the first time. Visually explore every aspect of this glorious organism of the natural world. Allow yourself to be consumed by its presence and possibilities. Allow your spirit to connect with its role and purpose in the world. Allow yourself just to notice and "be".

5. Touch Points

This exercise is designed to allow us to appreciate our lives by slowing the pace down, coming into purer awareness and resting in the moment. Think of something that happens every day more than once, something you may take for granted, like opening a door. At the very moment you touch the door knob to open the door, allow yourself to be completely mindful of where you are, how you feel and what you are doing. Similarly, the moment you open your computer to start work, take a moment to appreciate the hands that let you do this, and the brain that will help you use the computer. The cues don't have to be physical ones. It could be that every time you smell food you take a mindful moment to rest in the appreciation of having food to eat. Choose a touch point that resonates with you today. Instead of going through the motions on auto-pilot, pause and stay in the moment for a while and rest in the awareness of this blessed daily activity.

6. Mindful Listening:

This exercise is designed to open your ears to sound in a non-judgemental way. So much of what we see and hear on a daily basis is influenced by thoughts of past experiences. Mindful listening helps us leave the past where it is and come into a neural, present awareness. Select a new piece of music from your music collection. Close your eyes and use headphones if you can. Don't think about the genre or the artist. Instead, allow yourself to get lost in the journey of sound for the duration of the song. Allow yourself to explore the intricacies of the music. Let your awareness climb inside the track and play among the sound waves. The idea is just to listen and allow yourself to become fully entwined with what is being played/sung, without preconception or judgement of the genre, artist, lyrics, instrumentation or its origin. If you don't have any music on hand that you've never listened to before, turn on the radio and turn the dial until something catches your interest. If you don't have a radio, then take a moment to simply listen to the sounds in your environment. Don't try and determine the origin or type of sounds you hear, just listen and absorb the experience of their texture and resonance with your being. If you recognize the sound then label it with what you know it to be and move on, allow your ears to catch new sounds.

Reference: Alberta Association of Sexual Assault Services. (2015). First Responder to Sexual Assault and Abuse Training. Calgary, Alberta