

The Four Elements for Stress Reduction



Grounding

When grounding, we anchor to the present moment in the present reality. It is where peace is most easily found, in this moment we can find stability.

Take a moment to notice your surroundings:

- Use your five senses: what can you see, hear, smell, touch, taste?
- Locate anchors to the present moment Ex: A grounding object, something in the room, feet on the ground, a favorite pet, the sun on your skin, a beautiful sunset.
- If possible go outside and make contact with the earth, bare feet are best, right in the grass.
- Picture roots growing from your feet into the earth, or wood along your spine, or a grounding wire connected from your core to the center of the earth.
- The more you practice, the more your body knows what to do. You'll be able to ground on the fly.



Breath

Our breath is always with us and can serve as a way to center. Focused and relaxed breathing can change your biology and response to the present moment.

Take a moment to notice your breath:

- Where can you feel the breath most prominently in the body. The bottom of the lungs? The tip of the nose?
- Imagine there is a balloon in your stomach. On inhaled you can note, "inhaling." On the exhaled note, "exhale." If you get distracted, gently return to noticing inhale, exhale.
- Breathing through the space around your heart, while holding love and compassion, has an immediate positive effect on the body and mind.
- Notice the space and air around you. While maintaining grounding, your attention can travel upwards to the space around you, connect to the divine or something larger than yourself.



Flow

We can purposely turn on the relaxation response. When in fight/flight/freeze, our body turns on systems that are not necessary to make a get away.

Take a moment to notice your body:

- By noticing the saliva in the mouth, you can increase production, which turns digestion back on, interrupting the cycle.
- If your mouth is dry, take a drink of cold water or tea.
- Work up a sweat. Exercise is one of the best and most efficient ways to discharge tension and turn on relaxation.
- Find acceptance in the moment. Acceptance doesn't mean you approve of the moment, but instead are choosing to go with the flow. Resistance of the moment is a denial of reality and causes great distress.
- Hack the Flow state. Complete oneness with the moment causes fulfillment, which is shown to be more important to overall wellbeing than happiness.



Activate

Our system doesn't know that what we hold in our mind isn't real. We can light up adaptive networks in the brain that can serve us in the moment.

Take a moment to engage your imagination:

- Humans can use the power of imagination to purposely change their internal state. This can positively impact biochemical, genetic and immune systems in the body.
- Research has shown that the brain and body responds to thought and emotion that are cultivated in the imagination whether or not they are currently happening in "reality."
- Bring up an image of your favorite place, those you love, or times of mastery. Anything that feels good.
- Use the imagination to choose your state. You have the power to deliberately design your current state. It may not happen all at once, but the more you practice, the more your body knows what to do.