



**Cheshire**  
Wildlife Trust

# Grounding

## & mindfulness



A grounding exercise within this setting is about getting everyone in your group on the same page, ready to go and feeling present, rather than distracted by other thoughts or happenings from the day. It's a great way to get a day or activity started.

A grounding can help to clear your mind, recharge your energy, strengthen your instincts and calm your emotions. In this instance the primary goal is to welcome your group to your chosen activity space and help them to retune into the natural world around them.

Groundings can be a quick one-minute moment, a twenty-minute exercise or anything in between. The key to a successful grounding is to pick something that all of your audience can and are willing to do. Simple is often best in a group setting.

Roughly speaking most groundings will form around the principles of observing (O), describing (D) and participating (P). Some will focus on just one of these principles whereas others will have elements of two or even all three. These are a good starting point to consider when choosing a grounding for your group, matching your grounding to the group's interests, abilities, resources and surroundings.



# Indoor ideas



If you are limited to an indoor setting there are still nature-based groundings available to you.

## Tracing ( Observing & describing )

Give everyone a natural object - a leaf, a pinecone, a flower, a twig or a feather – and get them to take a minute to trace the edge with their finger. Encourage them to notice the shape, texture and colour as they trace it. What does the object remind them of: an activity, a memory, another object or creature? This can be a silent private exercise or you may identify someone who would like to share their object and thoughts back to the group.

## Window ( Observing & describing )

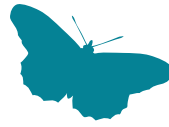
If you are fortunate to have windows overlooking an outdoor space, spend a couple of minutes noticing what you can see. Noticing the birds in the sky, the weather, clouds or trees moving in the wind are simple ways to focus attention back to nature. If appropriate, an open window will also introduce sounds and opportunities for touch; what can they hear, can they feel a breeze on their faces or the sun's warmth on their skin.

## Body & breathing ( Observing & participating )

If you are experienced in delivering mediation or grounding exercises a breathing or body observation practice is great indoors, particularly with some gentle music or nature sounds in the background. These exercises focus on noticing your body or breathing and working through a series of steps to help you relax. If you are inexperienced there are lots of two, five or ten minute self-guided videos online that are perfect for a classroom or workshop environment. Many of these will have a nature theme such as forests, the beach, birds or a summer meadow which means you can again tailor your choices to your group and their interests.



# Outdoor ideas



Any indoor ideas will also work outside but once out and about in a natural setting there are many more ideas to try.

## Noticing and Exploring ( Observing, participating & describing )

Take a couple of minutes to sit in your group and observe your surroundings. This could be with limited input from you, other than an initial instruction or it could be a guided activity with someone leading the group through a five senses observation over a few minutes. An alternative to this is to send the group on a short walk to see what they notice in the space, be sure to clearly set a physical perimeter, within sight and ear shot is good for safety purposes, and a return time to head back to the group.

If you'd like to spend longer on a noticing activity suggest that people find a space that they like on their walk and that they spend a short period of time, between 5 and 20 minutes, sat quietly noticing everything around them. This is called a Sit Spot, a place that someone can return to when they want a few quiet minutes. Revisiting this space and repeating the Sit Spot over the changing seasons can really help connect a person to nature and the space.



## Games (Participating)

For lively or family groups, games can be a fun interactive way to introduce nature. Nature inspired i-spy or the alphabet game are simple and effective, particularly if identification and learning new things is important to the group. Why not make it into a memory game too, 'In my backpack I packed a...' is always popular and brings everyone's attention to the group.

### Top tips

1. Taking a moment to reflect is a lovely way to help someone connect to their space. Ask the group to feedback what they've seen, enjoyed or felt. It doesn't need to be anything complicated, "the sun on my face" or "the squirrels chasing each other made me smile" but if someone doesn't want to share that's ok too.
2. If you think your group would like a guided grounding but you are nervous or unsure about delivering this type of exercise there are lots of great examples online that you could use instead and do the work for you, all you'll need is a charged up or plugged in media device.
3. Try taking 5 minutes to read aloud a beautiful story or poem with nature at its heart. If you are planning to meet with your group on a regular basis you could invite others to bring along and share a piece that they enjoy. Folktales are an amazing source of inspiration and often have beautiful illustrations too.

## Looking for more ideas and inspiration

- [Healingforest.org](http://Healingforest.org) – mindfulness group activities
- [Countryfile.com](http://Countryfile.com) – a-z of mindfulness in nature
- [Worldwildlife.org.uk](http://Worldwildlife.org.uk) – being present in nature - 10 practical exercises

Download more activity ideas at:  
[cheshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/nature-connection-toolkits](http://cheshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/nature-connection-toolkits)



## Further reading - mindfulness

Many grounding exercises use increasingly popular mindfulness techniques at their core so you may recognise or see similarities to practices you undertake yourself or have seen or read about online or in the media. With practice a daily mindful moment can lead to an increased sense of wellbeing. There are lots of resources available if you would like more information.

- [Mind](#)
- [NHS England](#)
- [Age UK](#)
- [Mental Health Foundation](#)

