

Earthing: Calming the Nervous System Through Mother Nature

Written by Terra Schaad

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The rush of news, rapidfire changes and social restrictions put in place to combat COVID-19 have affected every one of us. Physically, we are responding and adapting to this new normal, but for most, the reality of what is happening hasn't caught up mentally. This leaves a gap between the mind and the body that needs to be bridged.

Our system is designed to protect us from danger, and now you can see it working overtime. We can see this first-hand in the grocery aisles; our protective responses of flight, fight, and freeze acting as basic items like toilet paper are scarce causing people to snatch, steal, and fight over the purchase of them. We don't know what to do with the uncertainty, and so we react in protective responses in order to feel safe.

Now is best time to practice staying grounded using mother earth. Terra Schaad, founder of [Hunkapi Programs](#) and Somatic Experience practitioner, recommends these two easy steps to help calm our nervous system:

Earthing

While being in nature is a great way to relieve stress, you don't have to go to a large park or mountain to connect to mother earth. Walk outside and find the nearest grass or dirt patch, take off your shoes and make direct contact with the earth. Dig your toes in, feel the consistency beneath your toes, sit or lay down. Allow the earth's natural surface electrons to transfer energy from the ground to your body.

Feel silly? Do it anyway. Research shows that earthing neutralizes free radicals caused by stress and improves anxiety management, inflammation and immunity. In fact, 65 earthing stations are being placed in the Phoenix Fire Departments across the Valley to help fire fighters combat job related stress!

Orienting

Orienting is a practice that all animals do, but humans often forget to practice. It allows the body to use all its senses to scan for danger and look for safety, so it can relax and let go of the build of stress. This is especially important now while most of us are in a state of hypervigilance waiting for the next breaking news of quarantines, diagnosis, spread and death tolls.

While you are outside with your toes in the grass, orient. Look up at the sky, look to the left, look to the right and look down. It is important to allow your head to go from left to right or vice versa and let your eyes follow. You can also give yourself a task to find five circles or five red objects so that your head and eyes must move to find them. Then, listen for four distinct sounds.

Pause and notice any changes, no matter how big or small, you may feel in your body. You may notice tingling, pain changing locations, or even a big sigh.

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This 10- to 15-minute practice can reap big rewards of relief when the world around us is spinning.