

ADULT HEALTH BULLETIN



SEPTEMBER 2024

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THIS MONTH'S TOPIC STEP INTO NATURE: GROUNDING



When you think of going barefoot in the grass, the first thing that comes to mind might be that of a small child. But taking off your shoes and feeling the Earth beneath your feet can be worthwhile for adults, too. Maybe you have heard of the practice of grounding. Grounding is going barefoot outside on the grass or dirt. You might have heard that it is beneficial for your health, or maybe you have wondered if it is true.

People have practiced grounding (sometimes also called earthing) for thousands of years for its positive effects. But the practice became popular again during the coronavirus pandemic as a way to relieve stress. Stress relief is one proven benefit of

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grounding. There are other scientifically measured benefits as well. Recent studies have shown that in addition to reducing stress levels, grounding also helps improve overall mood, improve sleep and energy levels, improve circulation, reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression, improve immune system function, lessen the severity of chronic illnesses, and reduce pain in the body.

How does grounding work? When you stand directly on the Earth's surface, your body is able to absorb electrical energy from the Earth. Electrons emitted from the Earth act as antioxidants in human bodies that neutralize free radicals. Free radicals are known to tax our body's systemic function, leading to a variety of undesired results. They are also known to cause inflammation and may contribute to chronic disease risk and cancer. While part of combatting the effects of free radicals includes limiting contact with harmful plastics and other highly manufactured foods, products, and environments, counteracting those effects are just as, if not more important. Spending time outside, breathing fresh air, and eating a wide variety of plants are other important parts of our overall well-being.

Take care of your body and mind by trying grounding. Stand barefoot on a natural ground surface like grass, soil, or rock, in open air. Your yard is a perfect place to practice grounding. Or you could go to a local park or other natural setting.

As you relax your body, direct your attention to your feet. Feel the ground on the soles of your feet and on your toes and enjoy the feeling of your skin making contact directly with the Earth. You may choose to stand still or walk around if the ground is free of debris. Be mindful of sharp sticks, rocks, or trash that could hurt your feet.

As you're grounding your body, focus your attention on healing your mind as well by letting go of stress. Imagine the negative energy of your stress flowing out of your body from the top of your head, and the positive energy of well-being flowing into your body through your feet.

There is no limit to the amount of time you can spend grounding, so enjoy any mild days and sink your feet into the ground as often as you are able. Ideally, fit time for grounding into your daily or weekly routine to get the most from your experience on an ongoing basis.

REFERENCE:

<https://wellbeing.gmu.edu/thriving-together-series-the-well-being-benefits-of-grounding>

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