

Terra Lume[★]

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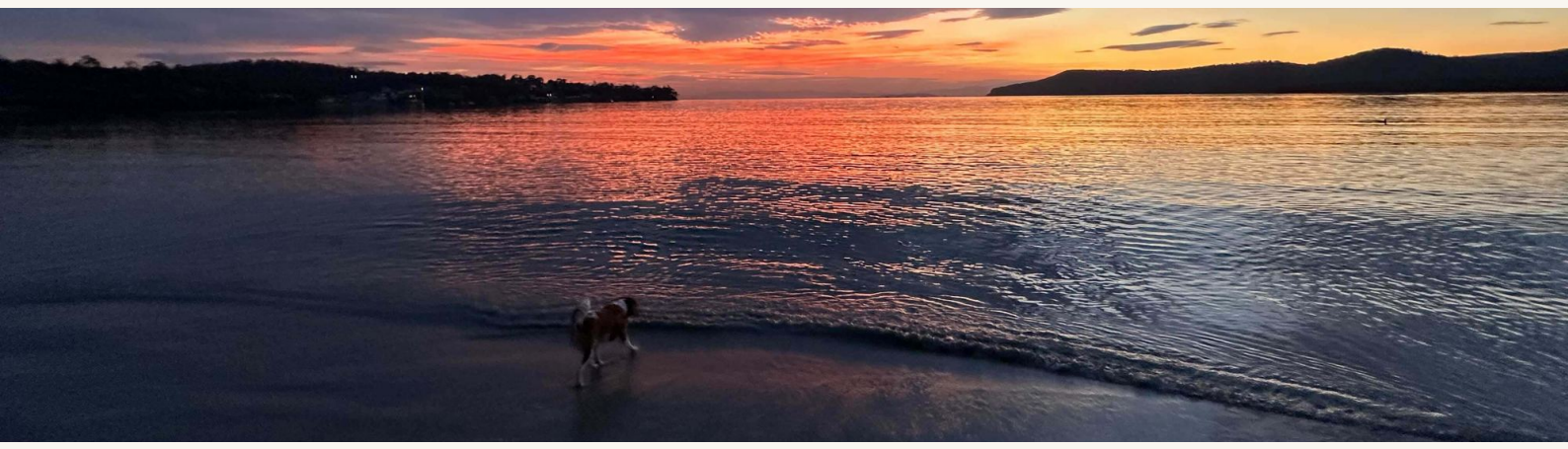
A TERRA LUME GUIDE

Grounding

A guide to your first energy practice

Ten minutes. Nothing to memorise, nothing to buy.

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Before you start

Most practices ask you to arrive somewhere. This one asks you to notice you are *already here*.

Grounding is the plainest of the energy practices and it looks like... nothing. It is so simple, there is nothing to memorise and, most importantly, nothing to buy. Yet most of us forget it or skip it. All you do is stand or sit and place your attention in your feet and in your tailbone. That is pretty much it.

Grounding is also the practice that everything else rests on. If you have ever tried to meditate and found your mind simply would not come down out of your head, grounding is likely the missing step.

This guide explains the practice, what is known about why attention in the body feels the way it does, and – most usefully – how to recognise the state you are in before you reach for it.

Ten minutes. You can read the rest later.

What grounding actually means

The word gets used fairly loosely, so here is the version worth keeping.

THE DEFINITION WORTH KEEPING

Grounding is the deliberate act of moving your attention out of thought and into physical sensation, using gravity, contact and breath as the focus.

That is it. You don't have to achieve anything. You are simply moving the spotlight of your attention from one place – the commentary running in your head – to another place: the actual, ongoing, physical fact of your body being held up by the ground.

The reason it has a reputation for feeling strange the first time is that most of us have not placed our attention there in weeks.

Some science, honestly handled

You asked for the mechanism, so here is what is reasonably well established – and where the popular claims outrun the evidence.

Your body is constantly reporting its position, and you are mostly ignoring it.

You have a sense called proprioception: the continuous stream of information from your muscles, joints and tendons telling your brain where your limbs are and how much load they carry.¹ You have another called interoception: the sense of your internal state — heartbeat, breath, gut, temperature. Interoceptive awareness is associated with activity in the insular cortex and has been linked in research with aspects of emotional experience and awareness.^{2,3}

The soles of your feet contain many specialised mechanoreceptors that respond to pressure, vibration, stretch and changes in contact with the ground.^{4,5} When you stand and put your attention there, you are not imagining sensation. You are attending to sensory information that was already being sent.

A longer exhale slows your heart, and this is measurable.

Heart rate rises slightly on the in-breath and falls on the out-breath — a phenomenon called respiratory sinus arrhythmia. Slow breathing, particularly around five or six breaths per minute, produces measurable changes in heart-rate variability and cardiorespiratory activity.⁶ A longer exhalation relative to inhalation has also been shown experimentally to increase high-frequency heart-rate variability under some breathing conditions.^{7,8}

This is ordinary physiology, not a special technique, and it helps explain why so many settling practices eventually arrive at a similar instruction: slow the breath and let the out-breath be longer.

Cold hands are not in your imagination either.

Sympathetic activation can reduce blood flow and temperature in the extremities, which is one reason your hands may become cold when you are stressed and warm again as you settle.^{9,10} It is one of the more useful physical changes to notice because it gives you something concrete to observe.

Where the claims outrun the evidence.

You will find a body of material about “earthing” — the idea that direct contact with the earth allows electrons to enter the body and produces a range of health effects. That mechanism has been proposed in the published literature, but the evidence base remains limited and this guide does not rely on it.¹¹

What is much better established is less exotic: the soles of the feet provide sensory information about pressure, movement and contact with the surface beneath them.^{4,5} If being barefoot outside makes it easier for you to notice your feet and your body, attention and sensory input provide a perfectly adequate explanation. There is no need to make a stronger claim.

One more note of honesty: you will also encounter polyvagal theory as an explanation for why cues of safety may help the body settle. It is widely used in therapeutic and wellbeing settings, but aspects of the theory remain debated. For that reason, this guide does not rely on it as an explanation for the practice.

How you know you need it

This is the part most guides leave out, and it is the part you will actually use. Grounding is not something you schedule. It is something you reach for when you catch the state.

Here is what the state tends to look like from the inside.

In your attention

- ◆ You read the same paragraph three times and take in none of it.
- ◆ You are talking faster than you are thinking.
- ◆ You open a browser tab, forget why, and open another.
- ◆ The day is over and you cannot account for where it went.
- ◆ You walk into a room with a clear purpose and it evaporates at the doorway.

In your body

- ◆ Cold hands. Cold feet.
- ◆ A tight jaw, or you notice your teeth are together.
- ◆ Shallow breathing high in the chest, and the sense that a full breath will not quite arrive.
- ◆ Shoulders up near your ears, and no memory of putting them there.
- ◆ You have not eaten and are not hungry, and then suddenly you are ravenous and irritable. Hangry.
- ◆ You need the loo and have been ignoring it for an hour.

In how things feel

- ◆ A sense of being slightly above or behind yourself — watching rather than inhabiting.
- ◆ Your head feels full and heavy; your feet feel far away and vague.
- ◆ Small sounds are unreasonably annoying.
- ◆ Everything feels urgent and nothing feels important.
- ◆ You snap at someone you love and cannot locate the reason.
- ◆ You feel busy without feeling productive.

This is not a diagnosis of anything. It is a description of an all-too-common state of being: pulled up and out of the body, running on thought.

If any of these sound familiar, you know the state, and this is *what to do about it*.

The practice

Ten minutes. Fewer if that is what you have.

Do it barefoot if you can, outside on grass or dirt if that is available, on a floor if it is not. If standing does not suit you today, sit with both feet flat. Nothing here requires you to stand.

1 Stop where you are.

Put the phone in another room, or at least face down and out of reach. No music — resist the temptation. The silence is part of it, and the first thing you will notice is how loud it can be.

2 Stand still and let your weight arrive.

Feet about hip-width apart. Knees soft, not locked. Let your arms hang. Do nothing for three or four breaths except let yourself be heavy.

3 Find the floor with your feet.

Move your attention to the soles of your feet and stay there. Where exactly is the pressure — heels, the outside edges, the balls of your feet? Is it even side to side? It usually is not. Is one foot carrying more than the other?

4 Rock very slightly and feel the change.

Shift your weight a centimetre forward, then a centimetre back. Side to side. The small movement gives your sensory system more information to work with, so the sensation becomes harder to ignore. Then come back to the middle and be still.

5 Slow your breath and lengthen the exhale.

Breathe in through your nose for a count of four. Out, slowly, for a count of six or eight. Let the exhale be genuinely unhurried. Do this for around ten breaths. If counting irritates you, drop the numbers and simply make the out-breath the longer half.

6 Take your attention slowly down the body.

Crown, face, jaw, throat, shoulders, chest, belly, hips, thighs, knees, calves, ankles, feet. A breath or two at each. You are not fixing anything you find, breathing into it or trying to release it. You are only visiting. Tightness noticed and left alone very often changes on its own.

7 Finish at the feet and stay there.

Take three more slow breaths with your whole attention in the soles of your feet and the floor underneath them.

8

Open your eyes and look around slowly.

Let your gaze travel. Name five things you can see, in your head or out loud — genuinely name them: “window,” “the grain in the table”.

This gives your visual system somewhere external to settle and helps bridge you back into the rest of your day rather than dumping you there.

What to pay attention to while you are in it

Curiosity, not assessment. You are gathering information about yourself, not grading the attempt.

- ◆ **Where the pressure sits.** Most people discover they stand more on one foot, or habitually on their heels. Interesting; not a problem.
- ◆ **Where your breath stops.** Notice whether the breath arrives in your chest and goes no further, and whether that changes over the ten breaths.
- ◆ **What your mind does with the silence.** Count how many times your attention leaves your feet if you like. Twenty is normal. Every return is the practice — the returning is the thing, not the staying.
- ◆ **Whether your jaw was clenched.** An enormous number of people find out they are holding their jaw the moment they think to check.
- ◆ **The temperature of your hands.** Check at the start and again at the end.
- ◆ **The bits you cannot feel.** Some regions will come back vague or blank. Worth noticing; nothing to do about it.

What you might notice, during and after

Everyone's experience is different, and yours will vary from day to day. These are simply things people commonly report.

Commonly reported during

- ◆ Yawning, sighing, or a deeper breath arriving on its own.
- ◆ Gut sounds, swallowing, or a sudden mouth full of saliva.
- ◆ Warmth or tingling in the hands and feet.
- ◆ A sense of getting heavier, or of standing more solidly.
- ◆ Small involuntary twitches or shivers.

- ◆ Restlessness first, settling second. This order is very common.
- ◆ Emotion surfacing without an obvious story attached. Don't go looking for one either.

Commonly reported afterwards

- ◆ Sounds seem to be at a normal volume again.
- ◆ Your own voice sounds lower or slower to you.
- ◆ Tiredness — sometimes a lot of it, quite suddenly.
- ◆ Needing the loo, or noticing you are hungry.
- ◆ Small things feeling less urgent than they did eleven minutes ago.
- ◆ Nothing much at all. This is a completely ordinary outcome and not a failure.

A NOTE ON FEELING WORSE

Occasionally people feel more unsettled afterwards rather than less, particularly the first few times. Slowing down can mean suddenly noticing what you had been outrunning.

If that happens, stop, make yourself a hot drink, and go outside for five minutes. Movement and daylight suit some people far better than stillness on a given day.

If stillness consistently leaves you distressed, this practice is not the right entry point for you at the moment, and that is worth honouring rather than pushing through.

How to hold it, and how often

Grounding is not a technique you get good at. It is a place you learn to find quickly.

Aim for once a day for a fortnight. Attach it to something you already do — first thing in the kitchen, or the moment you get home and take your shoes off — because a practice pinned to an existing habit survives and a scheduled one usually does not.

Two minutes done daily is worth more than *twenty minutes done twice*.

The version that will matter most is the quick one you reach for before you feel yourself spiral on a particularly challenging day: thirty seconds standing in a doorway, your attention dropping into your feet, breathing out slowly, and carrying on.

That is the skill. The ten-minute version is how you build it.

What this is, and what it isn't

This is a simple attentional and sensory practice, offered as a complementary wellbeing practice and as a starting point for anyone new to working with the body and your energy.

It is designed to support rest and reflection. Experiences vary considerably from person to person and from day to day.

It is not a treatment, and it is not a substitute for medical or psychological care. If something in your body or your mood concerns you, please speak to your GP or another qualified practitioner.

Grounding sits alongside that kind of care. It does not stand in for it.

If you'd like to go further

Terra Lume offers Reiki sessions in southern Tasmania and at a distance — an hour of genuine quiet, with the same principle underneath it as the practice in this guide, and someone else *holding the structure so you don't have to*.

Everything begins where this does. With your weight, the floor, and your attention.

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Grounded in earth, lit from within.



References & further reading

These references support the physiological and research claims discussed in this guide. Where evidence is preliminary, contested or does not establish causation, the text has been written accordingly.

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