

# Coping Skills Ideas

Learning new coping skills takes practice!

Keep this sheet nearby or take a photo of it so you will remember the skills when you are stressed!

- **Grounding:** *Reconnect with the moment and your body to help you get out of your head.*

Examples



- use your senses (name 5 things you see, 4 things you feel in your body, 3 things you hear, 2 things you smell, 1 thing you taste; this can be great to do while walking),
- breathe deeply (breathe in through your nose for 3 seconds, hold for 3 seconds, breathe out through your mouth for 3 seconds, hold for 3 seconds, repeat),
- squeeze an ice cube or splash cold water on your face,
- try a guided meditation (search “guided meditation” on you tube for lots of free options), etc.
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- **Emotional Release:** *Express whatever feelings are coming up, instead of ignoring or denying them.*

Examples



- scream, cry, write down your feelings or thoughts
- listen to music that matches your mood
- throw a tennis ball against a wall, squeeze a stress ball, punch a pillow
- if unsure what you are feeling, remember the 5 basic emotions: anger (frustration, irritation, hurt, etc.), fear (confusion, helplessness, anxiety, etc.), joy (excitement, hopefulness, playfulness, etc.), sadness (guilt, shame, loneliness, boredom, etc.), and disgust (shock, repulsion, dissatisfaction, etc.).

- **Self-Care:** *Do something nice for yourself.*



Examples

- take a long shower or bath, watch a show or movie you like, play with a pet (or a friend’s pet), make yourself food you like, buy yourself a small treat, etc.
- Create a self-care kit in advance so you have items assembled when you need them. Include things like snacks you like, create a playlist of songs or podcasts you like, lotions or essential oils that calm you, tea bags, etc.

- **Distraction:** *Divert your attention from things that are causing you stress.*

Examples

- watch TV, play video games, exercise, talk with friends about a different topic, color, read, etc.



- **Opposite Action:** Do something that promotes the opposite of your current feeling (e.g., if you're angry, do something that makes you laugh).



### Examples

- look at motivational quotes, listen to calming music, watch something funny, sing, etc.

- **Care for Others:** Do something nice for someone else to reduce focus on your feelings or thoughts.



### Examples

- walk a dog, help a friend with something, talk to a family member you don't connect with often, do community service, take out your neighbor's trash, clean your roommate's stuff up for them,

- **Use Some TIPS:** These strategies are designed specifically to help you relax quickly, especially when feeling emotionally dysregulated.



- **Temperature:** Hold your breath and put your face in a bowl of cold water, hold an ice pack on your eyes and cheeks for at least 30 seconds, or take a cold shower; these cause your heart rate to slow down immediately and activate the parasympathetic nervous system for a relaxation response. Make sure to keep water above 50° F.



- **Intense Exercise:** Exercising intensely (even for 3-5 minutes) can help get rid of energy that can be stored from strong emotions. Try running, walking fast, doing jumping jacks, etc. Exercise releases endorphins that help calm emotions like anger, anxiety, or sadness.



- **Paced Breathing:** Paced breathing can also cue the parasympathetic nervous system; try slowing the pace of inhales and exhales (about 5-6 breaths/minute). Try to breathe out more slowly than you breathe in.



- **Paired Muscle Relaxation:** Try adding muscle relaxation to paced breathing. While breathing deeply and slowly, tense each of your muscles one-by-one; notice this tension and then breathe out to let go of the tension by relaxing your muscles. Pay attention to the difference in your body as you tense and relax each muscle group.

- **Use Your Resources:** Asking for help isn't a sign of weakness, it's an opportunity to learn how to help yourself better.



### Examples

- talk with friends/family about what you're dealing with, go to professors' office hours, try FREE apps for stress management (Calm, Headspace, Breathe2Relax, or search 'stress management' in your app store), go to therapy