

# Alternative Coping Strategies



When you feel the urge to self-harm, tell yourself that you will wait 15 minutes and set a timer.



During those 15 minutes try some of the coping techniques on this page.



After the time is up, ask yourself how you feel, is the urge still there?

## Emotional Release

- Squeeze a cushion as tightly as you can
- Cry
- Talk to somebody
- Go for a run
- Take a cold shower
- Scream or sing
- Laugh or dance
- Write a journal
- Scribble, draw or paint
- Screw up paper and throw it
- Roll a newspaper and thrash against a tree
- Snap pencils or twigs

If you feel a strong emotion such as anger and need to release it

## Self-soothing

- Breathe deeply - in for 5 counts, out for 9
- Massage hands or feet with nice cream
- Mould clay
- Have a bath
- Eat something slowly and notice the flavours
- Walk on grass barefoot
- Light a candle
- Smell essential oils
- Hold objects with a nice texture
- Listen to soothing music
- Trace a pattern with your finger
- Paint your nails

If you feel anxious or low about yourself and need to feel loved and looked after

## Physical Release

- Squeeze ice cubes
- Eat a chilli
- Eat a lemon
- Take a cold shower
- Drink a glass of cold water
- Draw on your body

If you feel "zoned out" or unreal and need to experience an intense physical sensation

## Distraction

- Origami
- Puzzles
- Colouring
- Music
- Call a friend for a chat
- Tidy your room, or organise a cupboard
- Start knitting a scarf
- Say the alphabet backwards in your head
- Buy a magazine to read
- Go for a walk and pay attention to surroundings
- Watch funny YouTube videos
- Gardening
- Make a list of 10 things that you love
- Count the leaves on a tree
- Untangle something
- Bake a cake
- Make a collage using images you like
- Write a letter
- Watch a movie
- Make a plan or list

If you are not ready to think about things yet and need a distraction

## Extra Support

Let someone know how you're feeling and seek medical attention if you have taken more than the recommended amount of any medication or if you are worried about any self-harm wounds.

### Emergency Helplines:

Childline - 0800 1111  
Samaritans - 08457 909090  
HOPELineUK: - 0800 0684141  
For Urgent Attention Or Care: - 111

### Websites:

[www.selfharm.co.uk](http://www.selfharm.co.uk)  
[www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)  
[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

If you have tried to cope on your own but it doesn't seem enough