

Self-Care



Scroll down for lots of Self-Care ideas

Self-Care Ideas

- Cuddle with a pet.
- Read a new book.
- Bake your favorite desert.
- Watch your favorite movie.
- Go out for a ride, while singing to your favorite songs.
- Color in an adult coloring book.
- Take a nap.
- Go to the beach.
- Spend time in a garden.
- Leave yourself a love note.
- Repeat inspirational affirmations.
- Take yourself on a date.
- Star Gaze.
- Have a get together with your friends.
- Go to a museum.
- Dance to your favorite music.
- Stretch
- Get a new hairdo.
- Grow an indoor plant in your room.
- Go for a swim.
- Talk to your best friend.
- Buy yourself some flowers.
- Watch a standup comedy show.
- Try photography.
- Breathe deeply.
- Clean your house.
- Watch the sunset and sunrise.
- Eat healthy.
- Diffuse essential oils.
- Take a hot bath.
- Listen to nature soundtracks.
- Go for a run.
- Meditate.
- Get a massage.
- Watch funny movies/videos.
- Reconnect with nature.
- Get some sunshine.
- Go for a walk.
- Say “no” more often.
- Try a new hobby.
- Have a mini pamper session.
- Open the windows in your home.
- Go to the movies by yourself.
- Exercise.
- Spend time with loved ones.
- Pop some bubble wrap.
- Visit your local park.
- Ask for help when needed.
- Try a new recipe.
- Paint / Draw / Craft.
- Create a space for peace at home.
- Light a candle.
- Write in a journal.
- Visit an art gallery.
- Organize your closet and drawers.
- Volunteer in an animal shelter.
- Listen to your favorite podcast.
- Change your bed sheets.
- Tell someone you love them.
- Clear out your wardrobe.
- Take your vitamins.
- Take a new class.
- Go to bed early.
- Take a bath with Epsom salt.
- Apply a face mask.
- Be thankful.
- Ride a bike.
- Declutter.
- Go out for ice cream.
- Do a puzzle.
- Take your dog for a walk.
- Write poetry.
- Be mindful.
- Play a video game.
- Listen to guided visualization.
- Learn something new.
- Reach out to an old friend.
- Detox from social media.
- Get enough sleep.
- Redecorate your bedroom.
- Read an adventure book.

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- Drive somewhere new.
- Practice yoga.
- Turn off your phone for a few hours.
- Start a new series.
- Drink more water.
- Give someone you love a hug.
- Take a 10-minute work/study break.
- Dress up just because.
- End a toxic relationship or friendship.
- Go to the bookstore.
- Start a project.
- Buy yourself a treat.
- Hire a life coach.
- Get acupuncture.
- Listen to motivational videos.
- Wake up early and make yourself a good breakfast.
- Have a long cry.
- Take action towards a goal.
- Give yourself permission to do nothing.
- Set an intention for the day.

Note: It may also be helpful to make a list or collage of self-care activities you enjoy so you can refer back to it when you need it. Some of the things on the list may not be helpful or possible for you – do what works and is best for you!



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Self-Soothe

The idea here is to self-soothe your five senses (touch, taste, hearing, smell and vision) when you are in a crisis.

Touch



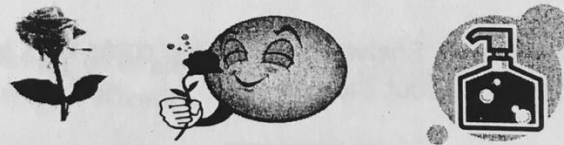
Taste



Hearing



Smell



Vision



Adapted from Marsha Linehan's *Skills Training Manual for Treating Borderline Personality Disorder*, Guilford Press, 1993. Designed By Josh Smith, dbcentermi@sbcglobal.net DO NOT COPY OR DISTRIBUTE W/OUT PERMISSION

Self-soothing exercises to reduce anxiety and/or panic...

- Exercise: What are 3 things in the room that are rectangular, circular etc.
- Exercise: What are 3 things in the room that are blue, green etc.
- Box Breathing <https://www.healthline.com/health/box-breathing>

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Coping Skill Spotlight: 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 Grounding Technique

How to do it:

This technique will take you through your five senses to help remind you of the present. This is a calming technique that can help you get through tough or stressful situations.

Take a deep belly breath to begin.

5 - LOOK: Look around for 5 things that you can see, and say them out loud. For example, you could say, I see the computer, I see the cup, I see the picture frame.

4 - FEEL: Pay attention to your body and think of 4 things that you can feel, and say them out loud. For example, you could say, I feel my feet warm in my socks, I feel the hair on the back of my neck, or I feel the pillow I am sitting on.

3 - LISTEN: Listen for 3 sounds. It could be the sound of traffic outside, the sound of typing or the sound of your tummy rumbling. Say the three things out loud.

2 - SMELL: Say two things you can smell. If you're allowed to, it's okay to move to another spot and sniff something. If you can't smell anything at the moment or you can't move, then name your 2 favorite smells.

1 - TASTE: Say one thing you can taste. It may be the toothpaste from brushing your teeth, or a mint from after lunch. If you can't taste anything, then say your favorite thing to taste.

Take another deep belly breath to end.

calming technique

Everyone knows that breathing is an essential part of life, but did you know that breathing plays an essential role in anxiety? This information sheet will briefly discuss the role of breathing in anxiety and guide you through a simple calming technique that uses breathing patterns to help you relax.

Breathing is a powerful determinant of physical state. When our breathing rate becomes elevated, a number of physiological changes begin to occur. Perhaps you've noticed this yourself when you've had a fright; you might suddenly gasp, feel a little breathless and a little light-headed, as well as feeling some tingling sensations around your body. Believe it or not, the way we breathe is a major factor in producing these and other sensations that are noticeable when we are anxious.

Anxious breathing

You might already know that we breathe in oxygen – which is used by the body – and we breathe out carbon dioxide. In order for the body to run efficiently, there needs to be a **balance** between oxygen and carbon dioxide, and this balance is maintained through how fast and how deeply we breathe. Of course, the body needs different amounts of oxygen depending on our level of activity. When we exercise, there is an *increase* in both oxygen and carbon dioxide; in relaxation there is a *decrease* in both oxygen and carbon dioxide. In both cases the balance is maintained.

When we are anxious though, this balance is disrupted. Essentially, we take in more oxygen than the body needs – in other words we overbreathe, or *hyperventilate*. When this imbalance is detected, the body responds with a number of chemical changes that produce symptoms such as dizziness, light-headedness, confusion, breathlessness, blurred vision, increase in heart rate to pump more blood around, numbness and tingling in the extremities, cold clammy hands and muscle stiffness.

The normal rate of breathing is 10-12 breaths per minute – what's your breathing rate?

The Calming Technique

While overbreathing and hyperventilation are not specifically dangerous (it's even used in medical testing!), continued overbreathing can leave you feeling exhausted or "on edge" so that you're more likely to respond to stressful situations with intense anxiety and panic.



Gaining control over your breathing involves both slowing your rate of breathing and changing your breathing style. Use the calming technique by following these steps and you'll be on your way to developing a better breathing habit.

- 1 Ensure that you are sitting on a comfortable chair or laying on a bed
- 2 Take a breath in for 4 seconds (through the nose if possible)
- 3 Hold the breath for 2 seconds
- 4 Release the breath taking 6 seconds (through the nose if possible), then pause slightly before breathing in again.
- 5 Practise, practise, practise!

Breathing tips

- When you first begin changing your breathing, it may be difficult to slow your breathing down to this rate. You may wish to try using a 3-in, 1-hold, 4-out breathing rate to start off with.
- When you are doing your breathing exercises, make sure that you are using a stomach breathing style rather than a chest breathing style. You can check this by placing one hand on your stomach and one hand on your chest. The hand on your stomach should rise when you breathe in.
- Try to practise at least once or twice a day at a time when you can relax, relatively free from distraction. This will help to develop a more relaxed breathing habit. The key to progress really is practise, so try to set aside some time each day.

By using the calming technique, you can slow your breathing down and reduce your general level anxiety. With enough practice, it can even help to reduce your anxiety when you are in an anxious situation.

Videos

- Why We Should Dare To Be More Selfish
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YEH9yvhwfVg>
- The Hard Work of Being Lazy
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4_k8CFmmlI8

Books

- The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F*ck by Mark Manson (available on amazon or <https://z-lib.org/>)
- Resilient by Rick Hanson (available on amazon or <https://z-lib.org/>)



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Building a Strong Support System

I know of others who have done research similar to yours. I believe they found from respondents that the most common reason for recovery is that someone believed in them. This is most often the catalyst in recovery.

Everyone needs at least *five* good friends or supporters they can call on when they need someone to talk to – people who can count on you when they need a friend as well. Family members and partners are also candidates for your support network. Choose people whom you love and trust. They should be people who can:

- *Empathize with you:* be able to say, “I understand what you are going through”, and “I can see this is a really difficult time for you”.
- *Affirm your individuality and your strengths:* Treat you with love, humor, and honesty; validate and encourage you and your dreams.
- *Play with you:* Sing, dance, join you in whatever fun activity you both enjoy!
- *Be Open-Minded:* Let you describe how you are, what you feel, and what you want.
- *Accept your ups and downs* without being judgmental, who can help you as well as ask for your help.
- *Work with you* as you decide on your next best step and support you as you carry through.

toxic positivity

being negative won't help you

good vibes only

you'll get over it

other people have it a lot worse

smile, crying won't help

just stay positive

Genuine Optimism

it's important to let it out. is there anything i can do to make this easier for you?

i love you through all your emotional states

you are so resilient, and your strength will get you through it

you are not alone, and there is support to help you

it's okay to cry, we all do. can i get you a tissue or a hug?

things are tough right now. do you wanna talk about it, or do something lighthearted?

@crazyheadcomics



Adapted from: Watson, P., Gist, R., Taylor, V. Evlander, E., Leto, F., Martin, R., Vaught, D., Nash, W.P., Westphal, R., & Litz, B. (2013). Stress First Aid for Firefighters and Emergency Services Personnel. National Fallen Firefighters Foundation.

Note: The "yellow" zone is a signal to participate in self-care activities, rest, and reduce stress. You may also wish to reach out to your support system (friends, family, etc.). The "orange" and "red" zones are a signal to participate in self-care, reach out to your support system (friends, family, etc.), AND to reach out to a therapist or mental health professional. For the "red" zone, it is extremely important to reach out to your support system and to a mental health professional. Reaching out to a mental health professional while in the "orange" zone can help prevent moving to the "red" zone.

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