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# DISTRACTION TECHNIQUES



**PAPYRUS**  
PREVENTION OF YOUNG SUICIDE

# EXAMPLES OF DISTRACTION TECHNIQUES

When experiencing thoughts of suicide, it can be helpful to try and use distraction techniques as part of your plan to stay safe. Distractions can bring focus to something else which can help quieten those thoughts.



Everybody responds differently to distractions. What works for one person, may not work for someone else. This document can be used as a starting point to explore the types of distractions that can be helpful for you when managing thoughts of suicide.



# SELF-CARE ISNT SELFISH

**Remember to allow yourself to feel your emotions. Distracting yourself from them constantly will inhibit your ability to understand your feelings and grow from them.**

**It can be hard to focus on distractions if you are not doing the basic things to look after yourself. Self-care is necessary and not a luxury.**

Before trying a distraction technique, consider the following:

- Have I had enough sleep?
- Have I had something to eat today?
- Have I had something to drink?

**Taking care of these basic needs and making sure you are as comfortable as possible will make distracting yourself from thoughts of suicide that little bit easier.**

# PHYSICAL DISTRACTIONS

Go out doors - take your pet if you have one

Use a punch bag or hit a pillow to release some frustration

Find some space and scream and shout

Go to the gym, an exercise class or for a swim. Yoga is particullary good for strengthening the connection between your body and mind

Sit in the garden, outside in the park or on the beach and listen to the sounds of nature

Try and do some cleaning and tidying

Play with a stress toy

Ball up your socks and throw them at a wall

Dance around and burn some energy.



# CREATIVE DISTRACTIONS



Try drawing, painting or colouring - mindfulness colouring books are available in most shops and newsagents

Start a blog. Perhaps you can write about how you get through difficult times to help others going through similar experiences

Make a playlist of songs that can help you - these can be sad, happy or uplifting songs

Learn a new song, listen to it on repeat until you have learnt the lyrics off by heart

Make a HOPEBOX - see our resources for ideas on this

Decorate your room

Try cooking or baking a new recipe

Play with kinetic sand - mould it, shape it or cut it up

Make shapes using [weavesilk.com](http://weavesilk.com) - also available on iOS and Android. Other interactive distractions can be found at [neave.com](http://neave.com).



# PRODUCTIVE DISTRACTIONS



Make a to-do list for your day or your week

Do something nice for someone else - visit a friend or an elderly relative. Invite someone over and make dinner

Try and do some homework or engage in study time

Read a book or start a diary

Make yourself a personal development plan and focus on the things you want to do and achieve - short-term and long-term.

Rearrange or organise your wardrobe or drawers

Have a clear out of stuff you don't want or need anymore - perhaps donate it to charity

Go shopping and treat yourself to something you want - why not buy the materials you need to make a HOPEBOX.



# SOOTHING DISTRACTIONS

Use your favourite bubble bath or shower gels and have a long bath or shower - set the mood with candles and relaxing music or an audio book

Wrap yourself in a blanket or layer up in jumpers and hoodies

Go to your safe place - this could be inside or outside. This should be a place where you feel calm and safe

Switch off all your technology and take time for yourself - try sitting in the dark and focusing on your breathing

Treat yourself to your comfort food or a hot drink

Watch videos on YouTube - music videos, animal videos, cartoons or tutorials

Engage in a skin care routine - try face masks, face washes or trim and file your nails

Watch your favourite childhood film or something new you have been wanting to see

Use a mediation tool such as [pixelthought.co](https://pixelthought.co) or Headspace app (available on iOS and Android)



**If you are struggling to distract yourself from your thoughts, talking can be helpful. For a safe space to talk through thoughts of suicide, speak to a Suicide Prevention Adviser by calling HOPELINEUK on 0800 068 4141.**

**Try reaching out to those close to you - speak to family and friends, let them know how you are feeling so they can support you with staying safe from suicide.**

**If you feel you have no one you can talk to, the Samaritans offer a 24 hour listening service and can be contacted on 116 123.**

**HOPELINEUK**