

## 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.

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

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:

*Self care isn't selfish*

- 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 and relaxed as possible will make distracting yourself from thoughts of suicide that little bit easier.

| PHYSICAL  | CREATIVE   |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Go outdoors – take your pet if you have one.</li> <li>• Use a punch bag or hit a pillow to release some frustration.</li> <li>• Find some space and scream and shout.</li> <li>• Practice breathing techniques.</li> <li>• Go to the gym, an exercise class or for a swim – Yoga is particularly good for strengthening the connection between your body and mind.</li> <li>• Sit in the garden, outside in a park or on the beach and listen to the sound of nature.</li> <li>• Try and do some cleaning and tidying.</li> <li>• Play with a stress toy.</li> <li>• Ball up your socks and throw them at the wall.</li> <li>• Dance around and burn some energy.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Try some drawing, painting or colouring – mindfulness colouring books are available in most shops and newsagents.</li> <li>• Start a blog – perhaps you can write about how you get through difficult times to help others going through similar experiences.</li> <li>• Make a playlist of songs that can help you – these can be sad, happy or uplifting songs.</li> <li>• Learn a new song – listen to it on repeat until you have learnt the lyrics off by heart.</li> <li>• Make a Hope Book or a Hope Box – see our resources for ideas on this.</li> <li>• Decorate your room.</li> <li>• Try cooking or baking a new recipe.</li> <li>• Play with kinetic sand – mould it, shape it or cut it up.</li> <li>• Make shapes using <a href="http://weavesilk.com">weavesilk.com</a> – also available on iOS and Android. Other interactive distractions can be found at <a href="http://neave.com">neave.com</a></li> </ul> |

| PRODUCTIVE  | SOOTHING   |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make a to-do list for your day or for your week.</li> <li>• Do something nice for someone else – visit a friend or an elderly relative. Invite someone over and make dinner.</li> <li>• Try and do some homework or engage in study time.</li> <li>• Read a book or start a diary.</li> <li>• Make yourself a personal development plan and focus on the things you want to do and achieve – short-term and long-term.</li> <li>• Rearrange or organise your wardrobe or drawers.</li> <li>• Have a clear out of stuff you don't want or need anymore – perhaps donate it to charity.</li> <li>• Write a letter – see our resources for a letter template you can use to tell others about your thoughts of suicide.</li> <li>• Go shopping and treat yourself to something you want – why not buy the materials you need to create a Hope book/Hope box?</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Wrap yourself in a blanket or layer up in jumpers and hoodies.</li> <li>• Go to your safe place – this could be inside or outside. This should be a place where you feel calm and safe.</li> <li>• Switch off all your technology and take time for yourself – try sitting in the dark and focusing on your breathing.</li> <li>• Treat yourself to your comfort food or a hot drink.</li> <li>• Watch videos on YouTube – music videos, animal videos, cartoons or tutorials.</li> <li>• Engage in a skin care routine – try face masks, face washes or trim and file your nails.</li> <li>• Watch your favourite childhood film or something new you have been wanting to see.</li> <li>• Use a meditation tool such as pixelthought.co or Headspace (available on iOS and Android)</li> </ul> |

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 advisor by calling **HOPELINEUK** on 0800 068 41 41.

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.