

# Distractions from Self-Harm

When you have an urge to hurt yourself, it can be difficult to imagine doing anything else. Distraction is the most common way people help themselves when they want to self-harm. Different distractions work for different people, and the same ones may not always work for you.

## Actions and Reminders

Here are some ideas of **actions and reminders** that may help you to distract yourself from your urges.

**Repeat to yourself "I don't deserve to be hurt" until you believe it**

**Remember you don't have to hurt yourself**

**Create a safe space in your mind and take yourself there**

**Keep yourself safe**

**Write down positive affirmations or speak them aloud**

**Take deep breaths in and out slowly**

**Name 5 things you can see, hear and touch**



**Feel your pulse to prove you are alive**

**Remind yourself that you are strong and capable of anything**

**Let yourself cry**

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## Physical Sensations

Here are some ideas of distractions that may provide alternative physical sensations if you are struggling to ignore your urges.

**Scream and shout to get out all of your emotions**

**Play with slime, plasticine or sand**

**Go on a walk outside and get some fresh air**

**Dance/Meditation/Yoga/Stretches/Exercise**

**Do some breathing exercises**

**Crunch ice or pop bubblewrap**

**Take a relaxing bath or shower**

**Hug a pillow or soft toy really tight**

**Splash water on your face**

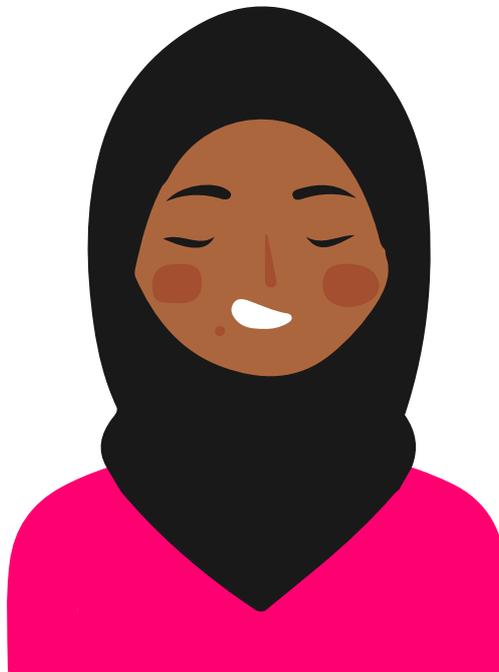
**Play with stress balls or fidget toys**

**Write or paint on yourself**

**Shake your body around crazily and stamp your feet**

**Eat something super sweet or super sour**

**Rip up paper into small pieces**



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## Constructive Distractions

Here are some ideas of distractions that can be constructive ways of distracting yourself from your bad thoughts and urges.

**Re-organise your bedroom, clothes or photographs**

**Write a list of positive things in your life**

**Apply fake nails or nail polish**

**Write a to-do list**

**Listen to a podcast**

**Make plans to see your friends**

**Learn a new skill or language**

**Do your homework or revise**

**Clean and tidy up**

**Research one of your interests**

**Practice your favourite hobby**

**Contact a helpline or chat service**

**Bake a cake or cookies**

**Read a book or start a diary/bullet journal**



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## Mental Comfort

Here are some ideas of distractions that may provide mental comfort if you are struggling to ignore strong urges to hurt yourself.

**Listen to music or  
play an  
instrument**

**Play with a pet**

**Watch your  
favourite TV show  
or movie**

**Look at things or photos  
that are special to you**

**Write down your  
feelings and  
destroy the paper**

**Think about things  
you are excited for**

**Doodle, draw or paint**

**Break sticks or  
splatter paint**

**Read a book or  
make a puzzle**

**Scribble on a piece  
of paper**

**Listen to music or  
white noise**

**Write down the  
lyrics to your  
favourite song**

**Create a happy place and  
make a story (guided imagery)**

**Remember a good  
memory and relive  
it in your head**

**Make yourself a nice warm drink**

