

Grounding Skills for Intense Emotions

DBT SKILLS TO HELP YOU SLOW DOWN AND REGULATE



Intense emotions are temporary, even when they don't feel that way. These skills can help you stay connected to the present moment, lower the intensity, and give yourself a little more space to choose what to do next.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Read through the skills below and practice them when you're calm. That way, they'll be more available when you need them most.



1. 5-4-3-2-1 GROUNDING

Use your senses to bring your attention back to the present moment.



5 THINGS YOU SEE

Name 5 things you can see right now.



4 THINGS YOU FEEL

Name 4 things you can feel (your body, clothing, surfaces, etc.).



3 THINGS YOU HEAR

Name 3 things you can hear right now.



2 THINGS YOU SMELL

Name 2 things you can smell (or imagine smelling).



1 THING YOU TASTE

Name 1 thing you can taste (or imagine tasting).



2. PACED BREATHING

Slow, intentional breaths signal your body that it's safe. Try this simple pattern.

4 seconds inhale → 4 seconds hold → 6 seconds exhale → 2 seconds pause

Repeat 3–5 times, or until your body begins to settle.



3. TEMPERATURE

Changing your body temperature can quickly shift your emotional state.

- ☐ Splash cold water on your face
- ☐ Hold an ice cube in your hands
- ☐ Place a cold pack on your neck or forehead
- ☐ Step outside or open a window for cool air
- ☐ Other: _____



4. INTENSE EXERCISE

Moving your body can help release built-up energy and reduce emotional intensity.

- ☐ Do 20 jumping jacks or jump in place
- ☐ Run or walk quickly for a few minutes
- ☐ Do a quick bodyweight circuit (squats, push-ups, etc.)
- ☐ Dance to a song you enjoy
- ☐ Other: _____



5. SELF-SOOTHE WITH YOUR SENSES

Engage your senses in a comforting way. Choose one or more:

- ☐ **Vision:** Look at something calming or pleasant
- ☐ **Hearing:** Listen to soothing or uplifting music
- ☐ **Smell:** Use a candle, essential oil, or lotion
- ☐ **Taste:** Sip a warm drink or enjoy a comforting snack
- ☐ **Touch:** Wrap in a blanket or hold something soft
- ☐ Other: _____



REFLECTION

Which skills feel most helpful for you?

What can you remind yourself in the moment?



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