



PAPYRUS

Examples of Distraction Techniques for Thoughts of Suicide



Why distract?

Sometimes when we experience thoughts of suicide, it can be helpful to try and use distraction techniques to stay safe for now.

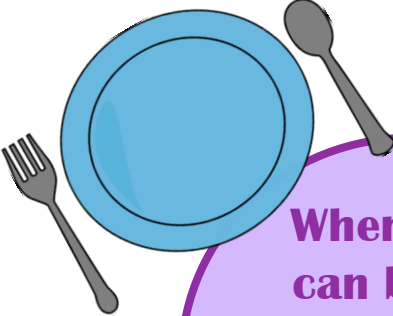
This allows us to focus on something else and can sometimes quieten those thoughts of suicide enough to access further support.

One thing to note is that everybody responds differently to distractions. What works for one person may not work for someone else. It is important to get to know yourself and what works for you, such as the type of distraction that you find the most helpful when experiencing distress and thoughts of suicide. Below are a couple of suggestions broken down into the type of distraction it might be. It is designed to be a **starting point** to help you to think of what might work for you.

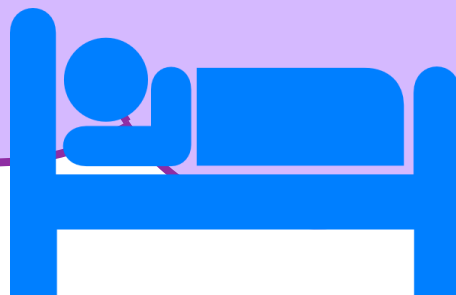



First things first...

Just a note to say that although distraction techniques can help when really overwhelmed, it is still important that we still allow ourselves to **feel** our emotions at times and not always distract ourselves from them.



When we experience thoughts of suicide, it can be really difficult to do basic things to look after ourselves, like **eating**, **sleeping**, and keeping **hydrated**. Not doing these things can actually make the thoughts of suicide and low mood worse however, as our brains and bodies aren't getting things that they need to function properly. If you can, try and do these things **first** before trying out some of the distractions suggested below.




Have you tried...?

If you find it helpful to do physical things:

- * **Yoga.**
- * **Go for a swim.**
- * **Build something.**
- * **Go for a walk (take a dog if you have one).**
- * **Join an exercise class.**
- * **Rearrange your room.**
- * **Do some gardening.**
- * **Do a YouTube fitness video.**
- * **Allow yourself to scream or shout to some loud music.**
- * **Use a punch bag to get out frustration and focus on your breathing.**
- * **Try some new breathing techniques.**
- * **Get outdoors and take some photos of things that you like.**

If you find it helpful to do creative things:

- * **Paint something.** 
- * **Use a mindfulness colouring book.**
- * **Start a blog.**
- * **Make a paper chain of all of the days you have felt suicidal and survived. Add to it every day you need to.**
- * **Sing- try learning a new song without looking at the lyrics.**
- * **Paint/draw online**
<http://www.onemotion.com/flash/sketch-paint/>
- * **Browse Pinterest and make a new board for ideas of crafts/fashion/cooking/baking/home improvements/inspirational quotes.**
- * **Make a playlist of music that makes you feel good.**
- * **Print some photos of memories and make a photo album.**

If you find it helpful to do productive things:

- * **Cook or bake something- try a new recipe.**
- * **Volunteer: <https://do-it.org/>**
- * **Make a scrap book or memory box.**
- * **Write a letter to someone who you're upset with telling them how you feel (you don't need to send it).**
- * **Rearrange your room or organise a drawer.**
- * **Try and do some homework/college/university work.**
- * **Write out to-do lists and break the day into chunks so things seem more manageable.**
- * **Do something for someone else, such as an anonymous good deed.**

If you find it helpful to relax and soothe:

- * **Have a bath or shower, make it more soothing with candles and music.**
- * **Get a hot drink and cuddle up in a blanket.**
- * **Create or use a self-soothe/hope box.**
- * **Go to the place where you feel the most calm and safe.**
- * **Get out in nature- is there a park near you or a garden?**
- * **Reduce any commitments and allow yourself to take some time out alone.**
- * **Listen to soothing sounds- You might find some on YouTube or a relaxation CD.**
- * **Wrap yourself in a blanket and allowing yourself to cry and feel the sadness instead of trying to mask it. It's okay to feel sad.**

Other Ideas:

- * **Download a suicide prevention APP such as Stay Alive.**
- * **Connect with someone who may be feeling similarly to you**
<https://www.elefriends.org.uk/>
- * **Write yourself coping statements**
<http://www.get.gg/positive.htm>
- * **Phone or text a friend.**
- * **Call a helpline to talk, such as HOPELineUK for thoughts of suicide (0800 068 4141) or Samaritans for a listening service (116 123).**
- * **Many people find gaming a good distraction.**