

Distress Tolerance Skill

T.I.P.P

Dealing with Intense Emotion



Temperature

Cool down to calm down:

Splash your face with cold water, hold ice, take a cold shower, or let cool air blow on you to calm your body and mind.



Intense Exercise

Move your body, shift your mood:

Match big emotions with big movement—sprint, do jumping jacks, push-ups, or dance it out hard.



Paced Breathing

Box breathe to steady yourself:

Inhale for 4, hold for 4, exhale for 4, hold again for 4. Repeat the cycle until you feel more grounded.



Paired Muscle Relaxation

Tense and release:

Pick one muscle group, squeeze tightly for 5 seconds, then let go. Move through your body one area at a time.



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These strategies address intense, uncomfortable emotions. They allow for physiological regulation, which leads to greater emotional regulation.

Temperature: Putting very cold water or ice packs on your face slows your heart rate. Put the front of your face into a bowl of ice water. Put an ice pack on your cheeks and upper face.*

Intense Exercise: Move your body to increase your heart rate for five to 10 minutes. This allows your body to return to baseline after exertion. Run or walk quickly, do jumping jacks, jump rope, or any aerobic exercise.*

* Temperature and Intense Exercise rapidly change heart rate. If you have a medical condition or take medication that affects your heart or heart rate, consult a physician before using these strategies.



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Paced Breathing: Take slow, deep breaths. Make sure your stomach moves more than your chest to take a deep breath. Count the length of your inhale and exhale for one additional count.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation: Tense muscle groups throughout your body. For example, tense the muscles in your face, hold the tension for about five seconds, release the tension, and notice the difference between tension and relaxation. Then move to your shoulders, then your arms and hands. Keep moving through the muscles of your body.

Squeezing: This is a Progressive Muscle Relaxation shortcut. Tense all the muscles in your body at the same time. Release the tension and notice the difference. Repeat this several times.



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