

Coping Skills Toolbox by Amanda Priest, PhD

Breathing & Relaxation Skills	Mindfulness & Grounding Skills	Journaling & Writing Skills	Sensory & Physical Skills	Distraction Skills:
4-7-8 Breathing Technique: Inhale for 4 counts, hold for 7 counts, exhale for 8 counts.	Insight Timer: Guided activities for stress reduction (download app or visit website)	Thought Record: Identify automatic thoughts, challenge distortions, replace with balanced thoughts.	Somatic (Body-Based) Self Care: Choose an activity from John Hopkins Somatic Self Care Library	Engage in a Hobby: Paint, draw, read, cook, bake, listen to a podcast or audiobook
Diaphragmatic Breathing: Focus on slow, deep belly breaths to promote relaxation.	Self-Compassion Practice: Complete a self-compassion practice or activity from Dr. Kristen Neff	Gratitude Log: Write 3 things you're grateful for daily to shift focus from negativity	Time in Nature: Walk outside in nature and focus on observing your surroundings using your 5 senses.	Create a Playlist: Curate a personal playlist of uplifting and calming songs for relaxation.
Box Breathing (4-4-4-4): Breathe in for 4, hold for 4, breathe out for 4, hold for 4, repeat.	ACT "Present Moment" Practice: Notice thoughts and feelings without judgment; return to now (the present moment).	Visualization Journaling: Use your journal to visualize and describe your ideal coping response in a stressful situation. Visualize desired outcomes.	Calming Movement: Yin yoga, gentle stretching, light gardening, Tai Chi	Uplift Others/Your Community: Volunteer or engage in community service Do a random act of kindness
Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR): Tense and release different muscle groups throughout your body to reduce physical tension.	5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Technique: Identify five things you can see, four things you can touch, three things you can hear, two things you can smell, and one thing you can taste.	Emotions Check-In: Note current emotional state and where you are experiencing feelings in your body. Describe any triggers that may have contributed. Reflect on typical response/urges and how you would like to respond based on your values.	TIPP Skills for Crisis: Temperature: Splash cold water on face. Intense Exercise: Short burst of physical activity. Paced Breathing: Slow exhale-focused breathing. Progressive Relaxation: Combine with PMR.	Organize a Space: Declutter a drawer, shelf, or small area in your home for a sense of accomplishment.
Ocean Breath: Inhale through the nose, exhale through the mouth with slight throat constriction. Imagine you are trying to fog up glass on a cold day.	Grounding with Objects: Hold an ice cube, smell essential oils, or touch textured items.	Emotional Release Letter: Write a letter to yourself, a specific person, or a situation that has caused you emotional distress.	Exercise for Emotional Release: Ideas – run or jog, jump rope, swim, dance, bike ride, kickboxing or martial arts	DIY Projects or Crafting: Knit, scrapbook, engage in a small furniture project, or make something with your hands.
Bee Breath: Inhale through nose, exhale slowly while making a humming sound like a bee, repeat for several rounds. Gentle humming soothes the nervous system.	Guided Visualization: Imagine a safe, calm place using all senses.	Self-Compassion Journaling: Write a compassionate letter to yourself, acknowledging your struggles and offering kindness and understanding to yourself.	Other Sensory Strategies: Weighted blanket or lap pad, sound therapy (binaural beats, nature sounds, sound bowls), stress ball or fidgets	Games & Puzzles: Crossword, Sudoku, Word Search, Board Games, Card Games, Jigsaw Puzzles, Adult Coloring Books
Supports/Contacts: - Jot down a list of trusted friends, family members, and loved ones you would feel safe reaching out to for support when in crisis - List of important phone numbers for crisis/immediate support Crisis Text Line: Text 'Home' to 741-741 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: 988				

Some physical activities listed in this toolkit (such as high-intensity exercise, yoga, or tension release techniques) may not be suitable for everyone, especially individuals with certain medical conditions or physical limitations. Please consult with your healthcare provider before starting any new exercise or movement-based practice to ensure it is safe for you.