

Alternatives to Self- Harm



Feeling sad or depressed:

- Do something slow and soothing
- Take a hot bath/ shower with bath oil or bubbles
- Curl up under a comforter with tea and a good book
- Hug a loved one or stuffed animal
- Play with a pet
- Do something nice for someone else
- Smooth lotion into the body parts you want to hurt
- Light a candle or incense
- Call a friend
- Visit a friend
- Watch TV or read a book
- Listen to upbeat music
- Give yourself a present

Craving sensation/ Wanting to feel:

- Squeeze ice
- Snap rubber band around wrist
- Put a finger in frozen food (like ice cream)
- Take a cold bath
- Draw on your body where you want to hurt
- Stomp your feet on the ground
- Slap a tabletop
- Focus on how it feels to breathe. Pay attention to the rise and fall of your stomach
- Rub icy hot where you want to hurt
- Bite into a hot pepper or chew a piece of ginger root
- Suck on a lemon or lime
- Give someone a hug

Feeling angry:

- Throw ice in the shower or at a brick wall as hard as you can
- Slash an empty plastic bottle, piece of heavy cardboard, or an old shirt or sock
- Punch a pillow or bed
- Use a pillow to hit a wall, pillow fight style
- Rip paper
- Throw glass into the trash
- Lift weights
- Go on a walk or run
- Make clay models and smash them
- Hit a punching bag
- Cut paper
- Pick up a stick and hit a tree
- Flatten aluminum cans for recycling
- Rip up an old newspaper or phone book
- On a sketch or photo of yourself, mark in red where you want to hurt yourself. Cut or tear the picture
- Blast music and dance

Feeling like a bad person:

- List as many good qualities about yourself as you can
- Read something positive that someone has written about you
- Talk to someone who cares about you
- Do something nice for someone else
- Remember when you've done something good
- Visualize a calming place in your mind and think about as many details as you can
- Remember a happy moment and relive it in your head

Wanting to focus:

- Do a task that requires focus and concentration
- Eat a raisin mindfully. Notice how it feels and looks
- Chew food slowly, noticing how the texture changes as you chew
- Memorize a poem that is meaningful to you
- Play an instrument
- Color in a coloring book or draw
- Listen to your favorite song and focus on the lyrics
- Complete a puzzle
- Read a book