

# DISTRESS TOLERANCE

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## Managing the emotional wave

Whether perceived or actual, emotional stress is challenging to deal with, especially for some people with a trauma history. A person's ability to manage an emotional incident without feeling overwhelmed is called distress tolerance (Linehan, 2014). Distress tolerance skills allow a person to survive an immediate emotional crisis without making it worse (Linehan, 2014). They also help them accept the reality of the situation when they feel out of control because they cannot change the situation (Chapman et al., 2011). Another benefit is that distress tolerance skills also help people cope with their feelings when they don't know exactly what they want or need at that moment.



### Drink a glass of water

Have a cold glass of water. Focus on the sensation of the cold water.



### Drink a warm drink

Have a warm, possibly milky or sweet drink. Some researchers suggest a warm, sweet or milky drink may provide greater comfort due to likeness to milk and maternal comfort as an infant.



### Eat a small snack

Have a small snack, even if you're not feeling hungry. Having something in your stomach can fuel your mind and body to assist with problem-solving the issue at hand.



### Ice cube

Have a small snack, even if you're not feeling hungry. Having something in your stomach can fuel your mind and body to assist with problem-solving the issue at hand.



### Cold Shower

Utilising the mammalian dive reflex, submerging your face in water triggers an autonomic response to reduce your heart rate in preparation for going under water. The discomfort from the cold water also acts to focus the mind on the physical sensation over the thoughts in your mind.



### Exercise

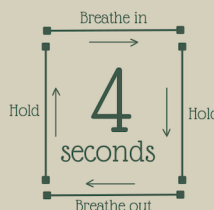
Stress hormones can often be sent to our extremities during times of distress. If you notice you are feeling shaky or tense, this may be the stress hormones preparing you for fight/flight/freeze. Exercising is a great way to work these out of our system:

- Do 5 pushups
- Do 5 starjumps
- Go for a run



### Call a friend or family member

Sharing your experiences and emotions with a trusted person can help alleviate the feeling of being alone.



### Breath work

Utilising your breath to slow your heart rate and ground you in the present moment.

- Try 'Box Breathing'
- Try loud vocal sigh, with full lung exhalation.



### Journaling

- Write a letter to your future self, family member or friend
- List 3 things you're grateful for today.
- Write down 5 things you can see, 4 things you can hear, 3 things you can feel, 2 things you can smell, 1 thing you can taste.



### Speak with a professional

Sometimes the wave is too great and comes far too often to manage alone. This is no indication of failure, more of a signal for more support.

Reach out to our team today to arrange an appointment with Rebecca.

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