
DISTRACT YOURSELF WITH PLEASURABLE ACTIVITIES

Sometimes doing something that makes you feel good is the best way to distract yourself from painful emotions. But remember, you don't have to wait until you feel overwhelmed by painful emotions in order to do one of these activities. It's also helpful to engage in these types of activities on a regular basis. In fact, you should try to do something pleasurable every day. Exercise is also especially important because not only is it good for you overall physical health but it's also been shown to be an effective treatment for depression in some cases (Babyak et al., 2000). Plus, exercise makes you feel good almost immediately by releasing natural painkillers in your body called *endorphins* (the same painkillers that are released when you cut yourself).

Following is a list of over one hundred pleasurable activities you can use to distract yourself

THE BIG LIST OF PLEASURABLE ACTIVITIES

Tick (✓) the activities you're willing to do, and then add any others that you can think of:

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Talk to a friend on the telephone. | <input type="checkbox"/> Go hiking. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Go out and visit a friend. | <input type="checkbox"/> Do something exciting, like surfing, rock climbing, skiing, skydiving, motorcycle riding, or kayaking, or go learn how to do one of these things. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Invite a friend to come to your home. | <input type="checkbox"/> Go to your local playground and go on the swing or slide |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Text message your friends. | <input type="checkbox"/> Go play something you can do by yourself if no one else is around, like basketball, bowling, handball, miniature golf, billiards, or hitting a tennis ball against the wall. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Organize a party. | <input type="checkbox"/> Get a massage; this can also help soothe your emotions. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exercise. | <input type="checkbox"/> Get out of your house, even if you just sit outside. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lift weights. | <input type="checkbox"/> Go for a drive in your car or go for a ride on public transport. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Do yoga, tai chi, or Pilates, or take a class to learn. | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Go for a long walk in a park or someplace else that's peaceful. | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Go outside and watch the clouds. | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Go for a jog. | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ride your bike. | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Go for a swim. | |

___ Plan a trip to a place you've never been before.

___ Sleep or take a nap.

___ Eat chocolate (it's good for you!) or eat something else you really like.

___ Eat your favourite ice cream.

___ Cook your favourite dish or meal.

___ Cook a recipe that you've never tried before.

___ Take a cooking class.

___ Go out for something to eat.

___ Go outside and play with your pet.

___ Go borrow a friend's dog and take it to the park.

___ Give your pet a bath.

___ Go outside and watch the birds and other animals.

___ Find something funny to do, like reading the newspaper comics.

___ Watch funny movie (start collecting funny movies to watch when you're feeling overwhelmed with pain).

___ Go to the movie theatre and watch whatever's playing.

___ Watch television.

___ Listen to the radio.

___ Go to a sporting event, like a football game.

___ Play a game with a friend.

___ Play solitaire.

___ Play video games.

___ Go online to chat.

___ Visit your favourite websites.

___ Watch funny videos on YouTube.

___ Create your own Web site.

___ Create your own online blog.

___ Join an Internet service.

___ Sell something you don't want on the Internet.

___ Do a puzzle with a lot of pieces.

___ Call a crisis or suicide hotline and talk to someone.

___ Go shopping.

___ Go get a haircut.

___ Go to a library.

___ Go to a bookstore and read.

___ Visit a museum or local art gallery.

___ Go to the shops or the park and watch other people.

___ Pray or meditate.

___ Go to your church, synagogue, temple, or other place of worship.

___ Join a group at your place of worship.

___ Write a letter to God or any other deity.

___ Call a family member you haven't spoken to in a long time.

___ Learn a new language.

- ___ Sing or learn how to sing.
- ___ Play a musical instrumental or learn how to play one.
- ___ Write a song.
- ___ Listen to some upbeat, happy music (start collecting happy songs for time you're feeling overwhelmed).
- ___ Turn on some loud music and dance in your room.
- ___ Memorize lines from your favourite movie, play, or song.
- ___ Make a short movie or video with your phone.
- ___ Take photographs.
- ___ Join a public-speaking group and write a speech.
- ___ Participate in a local theatre group.
- ___ Sing in a local choir.
- ___ Join a club.
- ___ Plant a garden.
- ___ Work outside.
- ___ Knit, crochet, or sew—or learn how to.
- ___ Make a scrapbook with pictures.
- ___ Paint your nails.
- ___ Change your hair colour.
- ___ Take a bubble bath or shower.
- ___ Work on your car, truck, motorcycle, or bicycle.
- ___ Sign up for a class at a local college, community house, or online.
- ___ Read your favourite book, magazine, paper, or poem.
- ___ Read a trashy celebrity magazine.
- ___ Write a letter to a friend or a family member.
- ___ Write things you like about yourself on a picture of your body or draw them on a photograph of yourself.
- ___ Write a poem, story, movie, or play about your life or someone else's life.
- ___ Write in your journal or diary about what happened to you today.
- ___ Write a loving letter to yourself when you're feeling good and keep it with you to read when you're feeling upset.
- ___ Make a list of ten things you're good at or that you like about yourself when you're feeling good, and keep it with you to read when you're feeling upset.
- ___ Draw a picture.
- ___ Paint a picture with a brush or your fingers.
- ___ Make a list of the people you admire and want to be like—it can be anyone real or fictional throughout history. Describe what you admire about these people.
- ___ Write a story about the craziest, funniest, or surprising thing that has ever happened to you.
- ___ Make a list of ten things you would like to do before you die.

___ Make a list of ten celebrities you would like to be friends with and describe why.

___ Write a letter to someone who has made your life better and tell them why. (You don't have to send the letter if you don't want to.)

___ Create your own list of pleasurable activities.

___ Other ideas: _____

