Self Soothe

Some of us may recognize these techniques as things that we already use. But many of us have never learned how to self-soothe, how to do those often simple things that makes us feel better. These are mostly very physical techniques, that use different body senses. Some of us have never had the feeling that we could do things to make ourselves feel better, calmer, feel relaxation or pleasure. I urge you to experiment with these techniques until you find some that are comfortable and helpful for you. And when you find these, practice them. Use them when you are feeling distressed, when emotions feel overwhelming, when situations feel like you can’t stand them anymore. Instead of doing something that hurts you, try something that gives you pleasure and comfort.

SELF-SOOTHING has to do with comforting, nurturing and being kind to yourself. One way to think of this is to think of ways of soothing each of your five senses:

- Vision
- Hearing
- Smell
- Taste
- Touch

VISION:
Walk in a pretty part of town. Look at the nature around you. Go to a museum with beautiful art. Buy a flower and put it where you can see it. Sit in a garden. Watch the snowflakes decorate the trees during a snowfall. Light a candle and watch the flame. Look at a book with beautiful scenery or beautiful art. Watch a travel movie or video.

HEARING:
Listen to beautiful or soothing music, or to tapes of the ocean or other sounds of nature. Listen to a baby gurgling or a small animal. Sit by a waterfall. Listen to someone chopping wood. When you are listening, be mindful, letting the sounds come and go.

SMELL:
Smell breakfast being cooked at home or in a restaurant. Notice all the different smells around you. Walk in a garden or in the woods, maybe just after a rain, and breathe in the smells of nature. Light a scented candle or incense. Bake some bread or a cake, and take in all the smells.

TASTE:
Have a special treat, and eat it slowly, savoring each bite. Cook a favorite meal. Drink a soothing drink like herbal tea or hot chocolate. Let the taste run over your tongue and slowly down your throat. Go to a potluck, and eat a little bit of each dish, mindfully tasting each new thing.

TOUCH:
Take a bubble bath. Pet your dog or cat or cuddle a baby. Put on a silk shirt shirt or blouse, and feel its softness and smoothness. Sink into a really comfortable bed. Float or swim in a pool, and feel the water caress your body.

De-Stress Kit
When you are stressed, it is sometimes hard to think or be creative. So plan ahead!
Take a box...and you fill it with things that make you feel good and things you can do for yourself.

Ideas:
Music. several different kinds for different moods.
Something comforting from child hood (ex. An old green teddy bear)
Pictures of kids, family.
A favorite food (Really expensive good CHOCOLATE, Really sour candy)
Special candles that are my favorite scent.
Some kind of craft project
Favorite herbal tea or hot chocolate
Bubble bath.
A journal to write in and a really good pen
Favorite movies that are just funny
A box of decadent chocolate mousse mix or other cooking project
A pedicure set with nail polish
A facial treatment.
A computer game
Articles from newspapers/magazines
A night light which glows different colors,
Pillow mist which is a very calming fragrance
A pack of playing cards or puzzle book.

What will YOURS have??????
Wise Mind ACCEPTS
A Activities (see distraction ideas below)
C Contributing – helping others
C Comparisons – comparing self with (better) self
E Emotions – generate different emotions by watching movie/tv, listening to music etc
P Pushing away – thinking about or putting our attention onto something else
T Thoughts - new thoughts. E.g. counting, playing 10 (10 colors in room, 10 musical instruments, 10 fruits, 10 Bond films etc)
S Sensations – use seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching senses
FROM: http://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/distresstolerance.htm

IMPROVE the moment
I Imagery – e.g. safe place visualisation
M find Meaning in the situation
P Prayer – meditation, spirituality, affirmations
R Relaxation
O One thing at a time
V Vacation – take some time out of the situation, 'me' time, or imagining yourself on an idyllic beautiful holiday
E Encouragement – positive and calming self-talk

FROM: http://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/distresstolerance.htm
DISTRACTION IDEAS
Distraction helps us feel better by diverting our attention away from the distressing thoughts. It works even better if you choose something that will really grab your attention and keep you absorbed in that activity. Different things work for different people. It’s worth trying and practicing many of those listed, and more that you think of yourself, a few times each before giving up on it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Home and Garden</th>
<th>Getting out</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mow the lawn</td>
<td>Join a leisure center or health suite</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clean the car</td>
<td>• Go for a walk or jog</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do some gardening</td>
<td>• Get the old cycle out!</td>
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<tr>
<td>• De-clutter a room or part of a room</td>
<td>• Visit a new church</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Sweep the path</td>
<td>• Go to the library</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Cooking or baking something pleasurable</td>
<td>• Visit a museum</td>
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<tr>
<td>• DIY</td>
<td>• Check out what movies are on</td>
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<td>• Bath the dog</td>
<td>• Go to a concert</td>
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<td>• Brush the cat</td>
<td>• Browse an antiques or charity shop</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Clean the hutch/cage</td>
<td>• Find out what free classes are on offer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Re-arrange the furniture in one room</td>
<td>• Potter around window shopping</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Go out for lunch</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Go to the beach – whatever the weather!</td>
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Leisure
• Do a crossword or sudoku
• Try out aromatherapy or reflexology
• Visit the hairdresser – try a new style or color
• Watch television or a DVD
• Play on the computer
• Surf the internet
• Watch the clouds whilst lying outside
• Read a novel or new newspaper or magazine
• Walk or sit on the beach or park

Being creative
• Take up a new hobby
• Learn another language
• Start an evening class
• Write a letter or article for a magazine
• Learn to meditate, do yoga or tai chi
• Start a diary or journal
• Write a short story or poem
• Take up a musical instrument
• Decorate a room, or a piece of furniture
• Paint, draw, sculpt
• Join a dance class
• Surf the internet
• Create a weblog or site
• Sew or knit
• Bake
• Make an ‘emergency’ box for distressing times – put in any small reminder of what helps
• Take photographs
• Make a scrapbook
• Sort out your photos

**Self Soothing**
• Have an early night
• Eat something you haven’t tried before
• Listen to some favourite (calming or uplifting) music
• Try a new newspaper or magazine
• Have a bath or shower
• Use aromatherapy oils
• Massage your hands or feet
• Write a list of things you have achieved, great and small
• Soak your feet
• Make a list of things that you can be thankful for
• Paint your nails
• Meditate, relax, yoga, tai chi, reiki
• Cuddle a soft toy
• Write a letter to yourself
• Read a letter you’ve written to yourself to read at these times

**Making contact with others**
• Telephone someone you haven’t spoken to for a while
• Join a self-help group
• Join a civil rights group
• Do some voluntary work
• Write a letter to someone you haven’t written to for a while
• Talk to a friend or family member
• Phone the Samaritans or another helpline
• Join an online support group or discussion forum
• Email a friend

**Express yourself physically**
• Bang a drum!
• Scream, shout or sing loudly!
• Rip up a phone book or newspaper
• Dance energetically to loud music
• Write – prose, poem, story, music, journal, diary, weblog, whatever comes into your head
• Write a letter to someone, but don’t send it – shred or burn it outside
• Run, walk, cycle, swim, go to the gym
• Paint
• Vacuum enthusiastically
• Kick a ball against a wall
• Punch or kick a cushion or pillow
• Cry

**Positive Self-Talk**
• I can get through this, I’ve managed before and I can now
• I don’t need to do this, it’ll only make it worse afterwards
• I’ll regret it and feel awful later
• It helps for a few minutes, but then it just makes it worse in the long run
• I don’t want to end up at the hospital again
• I can cope for another hour – I can take one hour at a time

**Positive Affirmations**
[http://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/distresstolerance.htm](http://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/distresstolerance.htm)
Here is a TIP for surviving strong emotions:

When intense emotions come up, it can be helpful to have several strategies to help with emotional regulation. A change in TEMPERATURE, INTENSE EXERCISE and PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXTION can be helpful. You may have to try several different strategies and ways of doing them to find the right fit for you!

TEMPERATURE:
A change to extreme hot or cold can be helpful. Cold water, especially if face is submerged in cold (ice) water can trigger the dive reflex. The dive reflex is like resetting you “flight or fight” response.

TRY: A hot shower. Make the water as hot as you can stand it without burning yourself

TRY: Take a bowl and fill with cold water and as many ice cubes as you can stand. Hold breath and dunk face for as long as you can stand it. Repeat as necessary.

INTENSE EXERCISE:
Intense exercise can get you breathing hard and get you focused on your muscles.

TRY: Running up and down a flight of stairs as fast as you can for 1 minute.

TRY: Doing as many sit ups, jumping jacks or push-ups as you can in one minute.

PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXTION:
Focusing on your muscles and breathing can be helpful for getting out of an emotion and into your body.

TRY: Start at feet and work up to the muscles in your face. Tense and hold for 20 seconds then relax for 40 seconds each muscle group. There are tapes which can talk you through this exercise.
DBT Pros/Cons

DBT Pros/Cons are different from mainstream Pros & Cons in that DBT Pros/Cons looks at the Pros and Cons of tolerating vs. not tolerating distress.

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<tr>
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<th>Tolerating Distress</th>
<th>Not Tolerating Distress</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PROS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>CONS</strong></td>
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In otherwords, it’s the pros and cons of tolerating the DISTRESS of a situation and the pros and cons of not tolerating THE DISTRESS of a situation.