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## 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: \_\_\_\_\_  
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