

DISTRACTION TECHNIQUES



PAPYRUS
PREVENTION OF YOUNG SUICIDE

CALL HOPELINE247 ON 0800 068 4141

EXAMPLES OF DISTRACTION TECHNIQUES

When experiencing thoughts of suicide, it can be helpful to try and use distraction techniques as part of your plan to stay safe.

Distractions can bring focus to something else which can help quieten those thoughts.

Everybody responds differently to distractions. What works for one person, may not work for someone else. This document can be used as a starting point to explore the types of distractions that can be helpful for you when managing thoughts of suicide.



SELF-CARE ISN'T SELFISH



**Remember to allow yourself to feel your emotions.
Distracting yourself from them constantly will inhibit your
ability to understand your feelings and grow from them.**

It can be hard to focus on distractions if you are not doing the basic things to look after yourself. Self-care is necessary and not a luxury.

Before trying a distraction technique, consider the following:

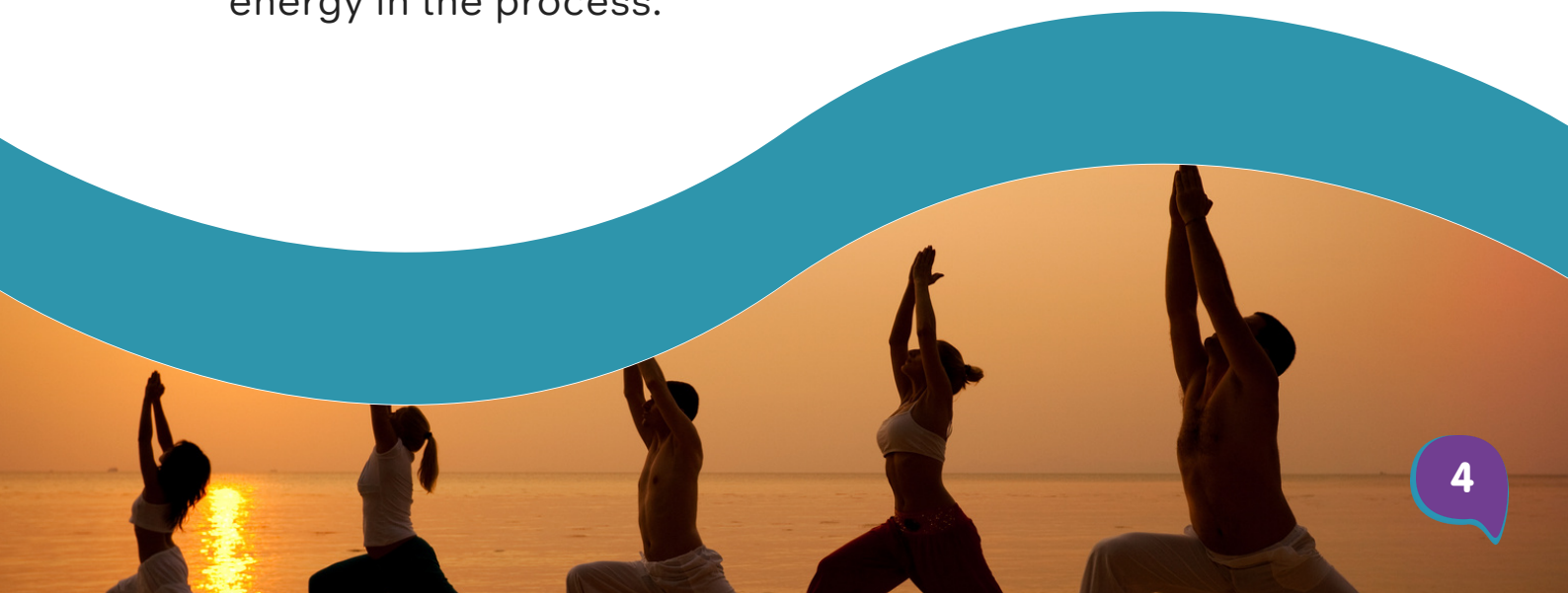
- Have I had enough sleep?
- Have I had something to eat today?
- Have I had something to drink?

Taking care of these basic needs and making sure you are as comfortable as possible will make distracting yourself from thoughts of suicide that little bit easier.



PHYSICAL DISTRACTIONS

- Go outdoors – take your pet if you have one.
- Use a punch bag or hit a pillow to release some frustration.
- Find some space and scream and shout.
- Go to the gym, an exercise class or for a swim. Yoga is particularly good for strengthening the connection between your body and mind.
- Sit in the garden, outside in the park or on the beach and listen to the sounds of nature.
- Try and do some cleaning and/or tidying.
- Play with a stress toy.
- Ball up your socks and throw them at a wall.
- Dance around and burn some energy in the process.



CREATIVE DISTRACTIONS

- Try drawing, painting or colouring – mindfulness colouring books are available in most shops and newsagents.
- Start a blog. Perhaps you can write about how you get through difficult times to help others going through similar experiences.
- Make a playlist of songs that can help you – these can be sad, happy or uplifting songs.
- Learn a new song, listen to it on repeat until you have learnt the lyrics off by heart.
- Make a **HOPEBOX** - see our resources for ideas on this.
- Decorate your room.
- Try cooking or baking a new recipe.
- Play with kinetic sand – mould it, shape it or cut it up.
- Make shapes using weavesilk.com – also available on iOS and Android. Other interactive distractions can be found at neave.com.



PRODUCTIVE DISTRACTIONS

- Make a to-do list for your day or your week.
- Do something nice for someone else – visit a friend or an elderly relative. Invite someone over and make dinner.
- Try and do some homework or engage in study time.
- Read a book or start a diary.
- Make yourself a personal development plan and focus on the things you want to do and achieve – short-term and long-term.
- Rearrange or organise your wardrobe or drawers.
- Have a clear out of stuff you don't want or need anymore – perhaps donate it to charity.
- Go shopping and treat yourself to something you want – why not buy the materials you need to make a **HOPEBOX**.



SOOTHING DISTRACTIONS

- Use your favourite bubble bath or shower gels and have a long bath or shower – set the mood with candles and relaxing music or an audio book.
- Wrap yourself in a blanket or layer up in jumpers and hoodies.
- Go to your safe place – this could be inside or outside. This should be a place where you feel calm and safe.
- Switch off all your technology and take time for yourself – try sitting in the dark and focusing on your breathing.
- Treat yourself to your comfort food or a hot drink.
- Watch videos on YouTube – music videos, animal videos, cartoons or tutorials.
- Engage in a skin care routine – try face masks, face washes or trim and file your nails.
- Watch your favourite childhood film or something new you have been wanting to see.
- Use a meditation tool such as pixelthought.co or [Headspace](#) app (available on iOS and Android).



HOPELINE247



If you are struggling to distract yourself from your thoughts, talking can be helpful. For a safe space to talk through thoughts of suicide, speak to a Suicide Prevention Adviser by calling HOPELINE247.

Call: 0800 068 4141

Text: 88247

Email: pat@papyrus-uk.org

Try reaching out to those close to you - speak to family and friends, let them know how you are feeling so they can support you with staying safe from suicide.



PAPYRUS
PREVENTION OF YOUNG SUICIDE

© PAPHYRUS Prevention of Young Suicide
Registered Charity Number: 1070896
OSCR Registered Charity Number: SCO52556