



# monte nido

# Coping Skills List

Different types of coping skills, organized by your needs in the moment, are listed below. Sometimes, you may need a more active skill, often the case when someone is feeling the urge to self-harm. In other situations, you may need a more mindful skill, such as when you are feeling fatigued and depressed. Matching the type of skill to your needs can lead to more effective grounding. Remember, it is unlikely that any of these skills will give you the same type of immediate relief that your eating disorder and other maladaptive behaviors provide. It will take *regular practice* for these skills to become the preferred grounding method.

**Distraction:** These skills redirect your mind to something else. However, these skills are different from avoidance!

1. Solving puzzles
2. Doing arts and crafts
3. Listening to music
4. Watching television
5. Reading
6. Playing computer games
7. Describing an everyday event or process in great detail by listing all the steps in order and as thoroughly as possible (for instance, how to go from your house to school or how to do the laundry)
8. Reading something benign backward
9. Picking a category of objects and trying to think of as many objects as possible that fit into that category (for example, types of dogs, cities, trees, and crayon colors)
10. Picking a color, looking for things in that color, and observing differences in their exact shade

**Grounding:** These skills break you out of your thoughts and back into your body, connecting you to the world around you.

1. Walking barefoot on grass
2. Meditating
3. Doing breathing exercises
  - a. Calm breathing
    - i. Take a slow breath through the nose, breathing into your lower belly for about four seconds.
      1. Try to breathe from your diaphragm or abdomen. Your shoulders and chest should be relaxed and still. Watch the hand on your abdomen rise as you fill your lungs with air, expanding your chest. The hand over your heart should barely move, if at all. If this activity is challenging at first, it can be helpful to first try this exercise by lying down on the floor with one hand on your heart and the other hand on your abdomen.



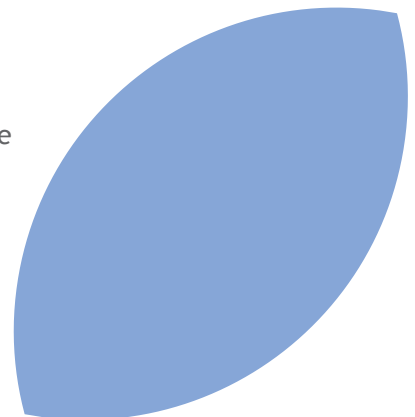
- ii. Hold your breath for one or two seconds.
- iii. Exhale slowly through the mouth for about four seconds.
- iv. Wait a few seconds before repeating these instructions.
  - 1. Make sure that you are not hyperventilating; it is important to pause for a few seconds after each breath.
- v. If this activity is challenging at first, it can be helpful to first try this exercise by lying down on the floor with one hand on your heart and the other hand on your abdomen.
- b. Square breathing: Breathe in for four seconds, hold your breath for four seconds, breathe out for four seconds, and repeat this exercise four times
- c. STAR breathing: Smile, take a deep breath through your nose, and rest
- d. Breathe in as though you are smelling flowers; breathe out as though you are blowing out birthday candles
- 4. Hold ice or a frozen orange
- 5. Practice progressive muscle relaxation
- 6. Attempt guided imagery
- 7. Do the 54321 exercise, naming:
  - a. Five things you can see
  - b. Four things you can touch
  - c. Three things you can hear
  - d. Two things you can smell
  - e. One thing you can taste
- 8. Reorient yourself by reminding yourself where you are, what day it is, what time it is, and how old you are

**Emotional Release:** These skills help release bottled-up emotions!

- 1. Throwing ice
- 2. Ripping paper
- 3. Popping balloons

**Self-Love:** These skills involve having compassion for yourself and taking care of yourself physically and emotionally.

- 1. Getting a manicure or pedicure
- 2. Use aromatherapy: lotions, scents, perfume/cologne, potpourri satchels





3. Taking a self-compassion break and repeating the following phrases:

- “This is a moment of suffering”
- “Suffering is part of the human experience”
- “I can overcome this moment in time”

**Thought Challenge:** These skills involve challenging negative, ruminating thoughts and focusing on positive ones.

1. Having eating disorder vs. healthy self dialogs
2. Gratitude journaling and dialogues for which you are grateful for at least three minutes
3. Creating a list of positive affirmations
4. Bullet journaling

**Values Work:** These skills involve connecting to your individual higher power and attempting to live your life congruent with your belief system.

1. Volunteering
2. Doing random acts of kindness
3. Creating a vision board
4. Asking yourself, “What would \_\_\_\_\_ do?” and picturing someone who embodies your values
5. Making a recovery bucket list of things you plan on doing or wish to do once you have recovered