

# Coping Skills Toolbox Worksheet

**What is it?** A Coping Skills Toolbox is a place for you to keep things that calm you down in periods of distress. If you have everything gathered in one place, it's easier to remember to use your coping skills rather than using (more familiar) negative behaviors.

**Tip: Be Specific!!!** The more specific you are, the easier it is to call upon these skills in difficult times.

## Self-Soothing:

Something to touch	
Something to hear	
Something to see	
Something to taste	
Something to smell	

## Distraction:

What can you do to take your mind off the problem for a while?  <i>(Examples: puzzles, books, crafts, art, crossword puzzles, Sudoku, positive websites/blogs, music, movies, etc.)</i>	
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## Opposite Action:

When you're sad	
When you're angry	
When you're lonely	

Adapted from the "How To Make a Coping Skills Toolbox" by False-Spring-Queen <http://summerofrecovery.tumblr.com/>

When you want to use drugs/alcohol	
When you're bored	
If you're anxious	
If you're depressed	
When you're feeling hopeless	
If you feel like hurting yourself	

**Emotional Awareness:**  
Identify what you are feeling.

ADAPTED FROM AND REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION FROM JULIA WEST.

Intensity of Feelings	HAPPY	SAD	ANGRY	AFRAID	ASHAMED
HIGH	Elated Excited Overjoyed Thrilled Exuberant Ecstatic Fired up Passionate	Depressed Agonized Alone Hurt Dejected Hopeless Sorrowful Miserable	Furious Enraged Outraged Boiling Irrate Seething Loathsome Betrayed	Terrified Horrified Scared stiff Petrified Fearful Panicky Frantic Shocked	Sorrowful Remorseful Defamed Worthless Disgraced Dishonored Mortified Admonished
MEDIUM	Cheerful Gratified Good Relieved Satisfied Glowing	Heartbroken Somber Lost Distressed Let down Melancholy	Upset Mad Defended Frustrated Agitated Disgusted	Apprehensive Frightened Threatened Insecure Uneasy Intimidated	Apologetic Unworthy Sneaky Guilty Embarrassed Secretive
LOW	Glad Contented Pleasant Tender Pleased Mellow	Unhappy Moody Blue Upset Disappointed Dissatisfied	Perturbed Annoyed Uptight Resistant Irritated Touchy	Cautious Nervous Worried Timid Unsure Anxious	Bashful Ridiculous Regretful Uncomfortable Pitied Silly

The five core emotions run left to right across the top of the table. Manifestations of each emotion based upon the intensity felt are described down each of the columns in the table.

Then channel that emotion into something positive and hands-on such as: writing in a journal, drawing, painting, making a craft project, etc.

## Mindfulness:

Center and ground yourself in the moment. Choose an activity to help you stay in the present moment. Ideas include - meditation, relaxation exercises, breathing exercises, listening to music, feeling and describing an object like a rock or a feather, yoga, etc.

### FLOATING ON A CLOUD

\* Lie on your back & close your eyes.

Imagine a big fluffy cloud floating above you. See it come down gently beside you.

\* Imagine what your cloud looks like. What color is it? Does it have a shape? This is your own special cloud... you are completely safe & happy when you are on your cloud.

\* Climb up onto your cloud & it will take you anywhere you want to go.

\* What things do you see as you float on your cloud? Where will it take you? Let your cloud fly you to a special place where you can rest quietly & feel peaceful.

### MINDFULNESS TECHNIQUES

1. Walking with the senses: notice where you are, the temperature, the scents, the colors, what is around you, what is unique about the situation, focus on what is happening in the moment.
2. On your way to work, listen to music and try to focus on one instrument or voice for the entire song.
3. Try a guided meditation; you can search Podcasts or YouTube for quick guided meditations. Do these during break at work or anytime you're needing to get centered.
4. Eat with your senses. Pay attention to each bite, the texture, tastes and feelings that come up. You are likely to enjoy it more and even eat less.
5. In your head, play a game. Think of every food item that starts with H or all the cities that end in E. Focus on this for a few minutes.

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## HOW TO START MEDITATING



### BREATH

Don't try to "calm your mind." Instead, appreciate the sensations of your breath in the same way that a wine snob tastes a cabernet. When your mind starts wandering away into thoughts, just recognize that you're thinking. Then return to appreciating the sensations of your breath.



### ARMS/HANDS

Relax your shoulders and arms, letting your hands rest on your thighs. Alternately, place one hand on another in your lap.



### LEGS/FEET

If you're sitting in a chair, keep your feet flat on the floor and your spine straight. If you're sitting cross-legged on a cushion, the important thing is to have your knees below your hips. If you need a higher seat, make one.



### EMOTIONS

Long-term meditators show increased size in brain regions associated with emotional regulation. "Larger volumes in these regions might account for meditators' singular abilities and habits to cultivate positive emotions, retain emotional stability, and engage in mindful behavior," according to a UCLA study.



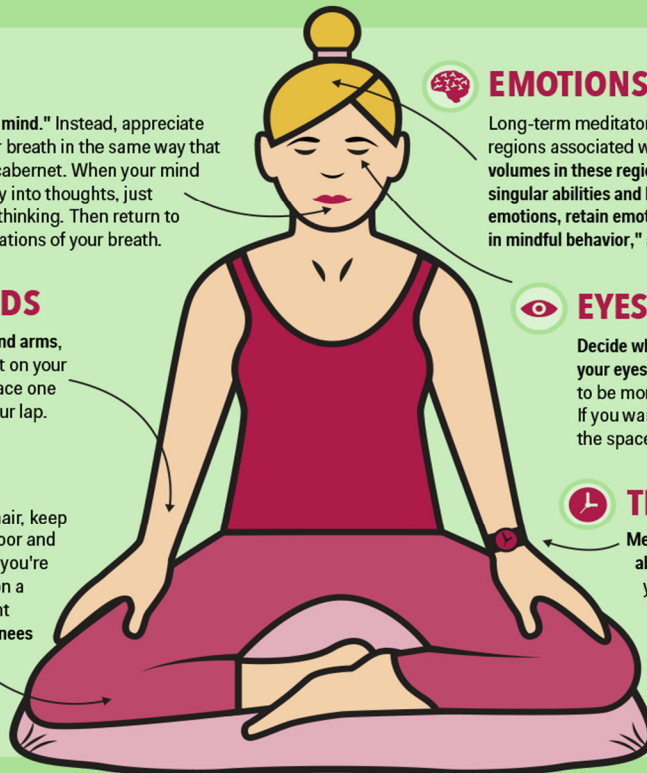
### EYES

Decide what you're going to do with your eyes. If you want the experience to be more body-based, close them. If you want to feel more anchored in the space you're in, keep them open.



### TIME

Meditation isn't about length; it's about frequency. In the same way you don't get strong by lifting one giant weight one time, you should try and sit regularly. Five or ten minutes a day is a great start.



**Crisis Plan:**

In a time of crisis, if you are feeling suicidal, if you find you cannot calm down or if the other things on this plan are not helping – you need to know what to do!

I will call _____ first:	<i>Name that person here, include their phone number. Do not text or message them, actually <u>CALL</u> them!</i>
If they are not available I will:	<i>Call someone else, go someplace, etc.</i>
If I cannot do either of these things, I will:	
My therapist's number is:	
National Suicide Prevention Hotline <b>1-800-273-TALK(8255)</b>	<b><u>If all else fails,</u> <u>go to the emergency room.</u> <u>If you are not able to drive, CALL 911!!</u></b>

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**References**

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