

Reflect on what works for you

You likely already have things that help you when you're feeling distressed, even though you may not think of them that way. Take a minute to think about what you do that helps you when you're feeling down. You may want to write them down.

Now reflect on what you've written. Do they involve people or things you love? What about faith? Are any of them not good for you, especially in excess?

What tools do you want to use more often? Or maybe you want to learn some more tools?



Feeling down? Start small

When we feel down, it can be hard to do the things we enjoy. We might feel like we don't have the energy to take care of ourselves, enjoy our regular activities, or socialize. Often, this can make our mood even worse. Even though we might not feel up to it, getting started can help improve our mood breaking us out of a cycle and starting a path to better mental health. Below are some suggestions for starting small. What are some activities you enjoy?

Get active: dance to your favorite song, go for a walk, or do your favorite exercise

Be social: call a friend, say "yes" to an activity,

Do something you love: play music, cook, read, write, etc.



Managing mood

Building a consistent routine can help manage your mood.

- **Exercise:** Physical activity can help when you are down
- **Balanced eating:** Eat the nutritious food you need to keep your body and brain energized.
- **Sleep:** Sometimes you might feel like you need less sleep, and for some people this can be a warning sign of shifting mood. Getting into a consistent sleep schedule can help manage mood.
- **Get curious:** Tracking your mood over time can help you learn more about your patterns



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Feeling anxious? Try the 5-4-3-2-1 technique

When we feel anxious, it can be hard to turn our mind back to the present. The 5-4-3-2-1 technique can help bring your mind to what is going on around you.



For this technique, keep in mind your senses. Notice 5 things you can see, 4 things you can feel, 3 things you can hear, 2 things you can smell, and 1 thing you can taste.

Watch out for the ways you avoid

Sometimes when we are distressed, we find distractions. This is normal and at times can be exactly what we need. Other times, it might get in the way of living the lives we want for ourselves. Sometimes when we always avoid things, it can also make the difficult feelings worse. Notice how making the effort to move through difficult emotions or challenging experiences might make you feel better in the long run.

Get curious, ask yourself:

- How often am I avoiding? What do I do to avoid certain situations?
- How is this avoidance affecting me? Is anything I'm doing not good for me in the long run?
- Is avoiding getting in the way of my goals, my relationships, and the life I want to live? How would my life be different if I didn't have to avoid things?



What are your strengths? What do you want to change?

Now that you've reflected on what works for you and tried some new skills, what coping is good for *you*?

Maybe you already implement some of these skills already! Did anything surprise you?

What do you think you need?

Want more activities like this? Visit:

<https://strong365.org/find-support> and take your "mental health quiz" for activities made for you!



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