

Examples of Self-Soothing Activities for the Five Senses

Learning to relax and soothe yourself is very important for many reasons. When you're relaxed, your body feels better. It also functions in a healthier way. In a state of relaxation, your heart beats more slowly and your blood pressure is reduced. Your body is no longer in a state of constant emergency, preparing to either confront a stressful situation or run away from it. As a result, it's easier for your brain to think of healthier ways to cope with your problems.

Self-Soothing Using Your Sense of Smell



Smell is a very powerful sense that can often trigger memories and make you feel a certain way. Therefore, it's very important that you identify smells that make you feel good, not bad. Here are some ideas. Check the ones you're willing to do, and then add any activities that you can think of:

- Wear scented oils, perfume, or cologne that makes you feel happy or confident .
- Collect fresh-cut flowers or seek out flowers where the smell is pleasing to you.
- Boil cinnamon sticks, or just smell the dried cinnamon sticks.
- Bake your own food that has a pleasing smell, like cookies, cake or bread.
- Be mindful of the smells of nature; try smelling a pine cone.
- Find some location where the smell is pleasing to you, like on the beach near the sea waves, or by a river or flowing stream, or a woodland walk, or the garden. In city spaces walk past places like coffee shops and bakeries.
- Hug someone whose smell makes you feel calm.

Add your own ideas:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Self-soothing Using Your Sense of Vision



Vision is very important to humans. In fact, a large portion of our brain is devoted solely to our sense of sight. The things you look at can often have very powerful effects on you, for better or for worse. That's why it's important to find images that have a very soothing effect on you. Again, for each person, it comes down to individual taste and preference.

Here are some ideas. Check the ones you're willing to do, and then add any activities that you can think of:

- Go through magazines and books to cut out pictures that you like. Make a collage of them to hang on your wall .
- Find a place that's soothing for you to look at. Or find a picture of a place that's soothing for you to look at.

- Find a collection of photographs or paintings that you find relaxing, such as nature photographs.
- Draw or paint your own picture that's pleasing to you.
- Carry a photograph of someone you admire or love.
- Make a part of your room look just the way you want it to.
- Look at nature around you. Watch stars, the moon, sunrise or sunset.
- Take a walk in a park or in your neighbourhood. Really look at and notice what is nice.

Add your own ideas:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Self-soothing Using Your Sense of Hearing



Certain sounds can soothe us. Listening to gentle music, for example, may be relaxing. However, each one of us has our own tastes. You have to find what works best for you. Use these examples to identify the sounds that help you relax. Check the ones you're willing to do, and then add any activities that you can think of:

- Listen to soothing music. This can be classical, opera, oldies, new age, Motown, Jazz, Celtic, African, Lo-fi, Ambient or anything else that works for you. It might be music with singing or without. Listen to a wide variety of genres to determine what helps you relax. Create a soothing play list. Use your smartphone or other mobile technology like an MP3 player to carry it with you to listen to this.
- Listen to recordings of books and stories that have a relaxing feel or content for you. Use breathing relaxation skills to be in a relaxed space as you are listening. You don't even have to pay attention to the story line. Sometimes just listening to the sound of someone talking can be very relaxing. Also sometimes the voice tones used in recorded stories or programmes for young children can be very relaxing for an adult to listen to.
- Explore programmes and find a documentary programme, such as a nature programme, that has an even tone or factual descriptive content. Make sure you aren't listening to something that's just going to get you angry or upset. Sit in a comfortable chair or lie down, and then close your eyes and just listen. Make sure you turn the volume down to a level that's not too loud. Find a programme whose presenter has a soothing and relaxing voice that will help you relax.
- Open your window and listen to the peaceful sounds outside.
- Listen to a recording of nature sounds, such as birds and other wildlife.
- Many people find the sound of the trickling water to be very soothing. Listen to the sound of rushing or trickling water. Maybe just sit in your bathroom with the water running.

- Listen to a recording of a relaxation exercise. Exercises such as these will help you imagine yourself relaxing in many different ways.
- Sing your favourite songs.
- Hum a soothing tune.
- Learn to play an instrument.
- Call a friend and listen to their voice.
- If you have cats, listen to the cat purr.

Add your own ideas:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Self-soothing Using Your Sense of Taste



Taste is also a very powerful sense. Our tongue has distinct regions of taste buds on it to differentiate flavours and tastes of food. These sensations can also trigger memories and feelings, so again, it's important that you find the tastes that are pleasing to you.

However, if the process of eating can make you upset or nervous, use your other senses to calm yourself. But if food soothes you, use some of these suggestions.

Check the ones you're willing to do, and then add any activities you can think of:

- Enjoy your favourite meal, whatever it is. Eat it slowly so you can enjoy the way it tastes.
- Eat a soothing food, like ice cream, chocolate, pudding, or something else that makes you feel good.
- Sample different flavours of something, like bubblegum, ice cream, sweets, herbal teas, savoury snacks.
- Drink something soothing, such as tea, coffee, or hot chocolate. Practice drinking it slowly so you can enjoy the way it tastes.
- Drink some cold water.
- Buy a piece of ripe and juicy fresh fruit and then eat it slowly.

Add your own ideas:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Self-soothing Using Your Sense of Touch



We often forget about our sense of touch, and yet we're always touching something, such as the clothes we're wearing or the chair we're sitting in. Our skin is our largest organ, and it's completely covered with nerves that carry feelings to our brain. Certain

tactile sensations can be pleasing, like stroking a soft dog, while other sensations are shocking or painful in order to communicate danger, like touching a hot stove. Again, each of us prefers different sensations. Find the ones that are most pleasing for you. Here are some suggestions. Check the ones you're willing to do, and then add any activities that you can think of:

- Carry something soft or velvety in your pocket to touch when you need to, like a piece of cloth.
- Take a hot or cold shower and enjoy the feelings of the water falling on your skin.
- Choose a scented bubble bath, and play with the bubbles, enjoying the feel of them on your skin.
- Massage yourself. Sometimes just rubbing your own sore muscles is very pleasing.
- Spending time with animals can have many health benefits. Pet owners often have lower blood pressure, lower cholesterol levels, and reduced risk for heart disease, and they experience other general health improvements. In addition, playing with animals and stroking the animal's fur or skin can provide you with a soothing tactile experience.
- Wear your most comfortable clothes, like your favourite worn-in baggy tracksuit, or old jeans.
- Soak your feet.
- Put lotion on your hands or feet.
- Put a cold compress on your forehead.
- Sink into a really comfortable chair in your home.
- Brush your hair for a long time.
- Hug someone.
- Hold a pine-cone.
- Hold and then catch a basketball, football, or baseball .

Add your own ideas:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.