

DBT Skills: STOP & TIPP

Two crisis-survival tools for creating space before an impulsive or emotion-driven reaction.

If you have a medical condition, are pregnant, or are unsure whether temperature change or intense exercise is safe for you, use another regulation strategy and consult an appropriate health professional.

STOP

- S - Stop. Do not immediately act on the urge.
- T - Take a step back. Pause, breathe, or physically step away if safe.
- O - Observe. Notice thoughts, emotions, body sensations, urges, and the situation.
- P - Proceed mindfully. Choose the next action based on goals and consequences.

TIPP

- Temperature: a brief change in facial temperature with cool water or a cool pack may reduce acute arousal for some people. Avoid extremes and medical risk.
- Intense exercise: short, safe movement can help discharge activation. Adjust for your health and physical limits.
- Paced breathing: slow the breath, often with a slightly longer exhale.
- Paired muscle relaxation: gently tense and release muscle groups while noticing the difference.

When to use these

These skills are designed for high-arousal moments when problem-solving is difficult. They do not solve the underlying problem; they help you get regulated enough to choose what to do next.

Practice before crisis

Skills are easier to access under stress when practiced in lower-stakes situations first.

Try this reflection

What are your earliest signs that emotion is moving from manageable to “I may act on this”?

Using this resource: For education and skill-building only; not diagnosis, medical advice, or crisis care. If you feel overwhelmed, pause and seek appropriate professional support. In the U.S., call or text 988 for crisis support; call 911 for an immediate emergency.