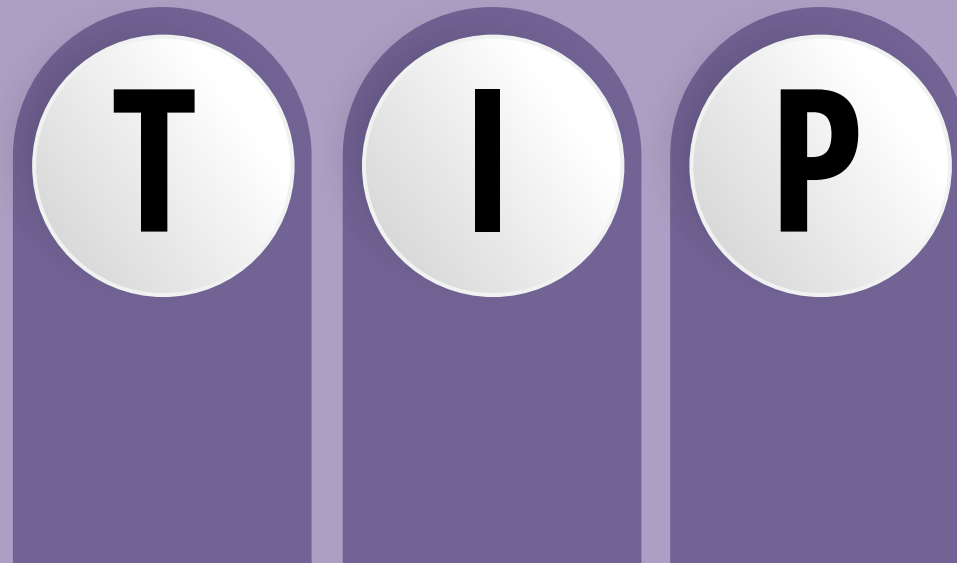


# The TIP Technique

## A DBT Distress Tolerance Skill

This guide walks you through the **TIP** technique, a set of strategies meant to help you push through periods of intense emotional distress. For each acronym, you'll find a meaning, purpose, and practical application.



**TIP** is a set of Distress Tolerance skills in DBT, designed to help you quickly regulate intense emotions by altering your body's physical reactions. These techniques provide immediate relief from overwhelming emotions, ensuring they don't spiral out of control. By learning and practicing **TIP**, you equip yourself with effective tools to handle distressing situations, anchoring you back to a calmer state.



**Temperature:** Quickly regulate emotions by using cold to activate the body's 'dive response', leading to a reduction in heart rate and immediate calmness.



**Intense Exercise:** Burn off adrenaline and release endorphins through physical activities like running or jumping to counteract intense emotions and ground yourself.



**Paced Breathing:** Control and calm your nervous system by breathing deeply and slowly, particularly by elongating the exhale, to decrease emotional arousal and anxiety.

**Paired Muscle Relaxation:** Reduce physical and emotional tension by systematically tensing and relaxing various muscle groups in tandem with paced breathing, promoting overall relaxation.

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### **T** TEMPERATURE\*

Using temperature, specifically cold, can rapidly change your body's arousal system, helping to reduce intense emotions. Immersing your face in cold water or holding a cold pack against your eyes and cheeks can trigger the 'dive response', lowering your heart rate and calming you down. It's a physical interrupt to emotional overload.

- *Fill a large bowl with cold water (above 50° F) and immerse your face in it, holding your breath for 30 seconds.*
- *Run cold water under the faucet and let this run down over your face and cheeks for 30 to 45 seconds while you focus on the sensations of the water. Visualize your stress being washed away as the water flows over you.*
- *Hold a cold ice pack or a sealed plastic bag of cold water against your face covering your eyes and cheeks.*
- *If you can't access water or an ice pack, get a cold canned beverage from the fridge and roll it across your cheeks and press it against your eyes, moving it to draw out the heat, focusing on the sensation of the cold.*

**Caution:** Please note that using cold water can lead to a decrease in heart rate. If you have a medical condition or are taking medications that may affect your physical capabilities, consult with your physician before implementing these techniques.

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### I INTENSE EXERCISE\*

Physical activity can be a powerful means to decrease unwanted emotions by burning off adrenaline and releasing endorphins. Engaging in intense physical exertion such as running, jumping, or even doing push-ups can rapidly decrease emotional intensity. It distracts the mind and helps ground you in the present moment.

- *For a short period of time, perform an intense exercise.*
- *Focus on the physical activity and expending your energy by walking fast, running, doing jumping jacks, or even push-ups or sit-ups.*
- *Your attention should try to shift to your muscles and sensations from your body as you expend your energy*

**Caution:** Please note that intense physical exertion can cause an increase in your heart rate. If you have a medical condition or are taking medications that may affect your physical capabilities, consult with your physician before implementing these techniques.

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### **P** PACED BREATHING

Paced breathing is about controlling your breath to calm your nervous system. Breathing deeply and slowly, especially elongating the exhale, can decrease anxiety and emotional arousal. By focusing on your breath and maintaining a steady rhythm, you can create a sense of balance and calmness.

- *Take a seated position while performing this technique*
- *Slow down your breathing using deep 'belly breaths' pulling air in slowly through to your diaphragm*
- *The breaths you take in should be faster than your breaths out (draw in five or six breaths a minute)*
- *Exhale at a slower pace than you inhale.*
- *Feel the rise and fall of your chest as you breath, shifting your focus to the sensations of your body*

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### **P** PAIRED MUSCLE RELAXATION\*

Engage in a sequence of tensing and then relaxing specific muscle groups throughout your body. By deliberately tensing up, you become more aware of what tension feels like. Upon releasing, you can better recognize the sensation of relaxation. This technique, often done in tandem with paced breathing, enhances the relaxation experience.

- *Begin by focusing on one muscle group at a time, like your feet or hands, tense them for a few seconds, and then release. Typically you want to tense the muscles for 5-10 seconds for an intense sensation, then relax the muscle group for 20 seconds before moving on to the next one.*
- *Progressively move through different muscle groups, working your way up or down the body. This method helps in grounding oneself and reducing physical as well as emotional stress.*

**Caution:** It's important to note that one should never tense to the point of pain or cramping. If any discomfort is felt, it's essential to release the tension immediately.