

100 Things to Do Instead of Self-Sabotaging Actions

Created by Dr. Lynn Margolies ([Visit Website](#))

This list offers a wide range of activities and is designed to contain options for both adults and teens with varied preferences. You will find some activities that you can relate to, and some that are not suitable for you.

Use your own judgment and skip over the ones that do not seem appropriate for you or aren't relevant.

INSTRUCTIONS:

Read through the list and circle or put a mark next to the ones that you can envision doing.

OPTIONAL: After reading and marking this list, create your own with only the activities you marked. Save your customized list to your phone or somewhere easily accessible/visible to you so that you can look at it as needed.

-
1. Do the exact opposite of the self-defeating behavior you had the instinct to do.
 2. Read a book.
 3. Listen to music (non-triggering), or a podcast.
 4. Go to the zoo. Watch and interact with the animals.
 5. Take some photos outside.
 6. Write an inspiring letter to your future self (as if you were the big sister of your future self).
 7. Text a friend and ask them to hang out.
 8. Organize your photos, files/folders, or something else digital.
 9. Prepare a meal, or a menu for the week.
 10. Go out for ice cream.

11. Go outside. Turn off your phone and look up at the sky, find the moon, and the stars if it's dark
12. Make your own list of things to do instead of something you will regret.
13. Snap a rubber band (hair band) on your wrist to distract yourself when you feel the urge to do something that you will regret later.
14. Read: 10 Things to Do to When Temptation Overtakes You ([click here](#))
15. Read: Self-Statements to Refute Your Inner Dialogue ([click here](#)) and re-wire your brain.
16. Comfort yourself with the strategies in Coping Skills for Pain & Suffering. ([click here](#))
17. Fast forward and write down how it will play out if you do the behavior that you are trying to stop. Then write how you will feel if you step up for yourself and engage in one of these activities instead. Write which path you will take and why? Make a conscious decision either way. If you choose the impulsive behavior then write down, "I am going to do, knowing that it will make me feel, and I am okay with that because....."
 - a. 10 Things to Do to When Temptation Overtakes You ([click here](#))
 - b. Values List ([click here](#))
 - c. Self-Statements to Refute Your Inner Dialogue ([click here](#))
 - d. Coping Skills for Pain & Suffering ([click here](#))
 - e. Identify Your Strengths & Virtues ([click here](#))
 - f. The 3 Happiness Myths ([click here](#))
 - g. Values-Focused vs Goals-Focused Life ([click here](#))
18. Remind yourself of your values and strengths using the tools below. Ask yourself whether the actions you are tempted to take are aligned with your values and capacities. Then make a decision to step up for yourself to be the person you want to be.
 - a. Values list ([click here](#))
 - b. Identify Your Strengths & Virtues ([click here](#))
19. Watch these videos:
 - a. The 3 Happiness Myths ([click here](#))
 - b. Values-Focused vs Goals-Focused Life ([click here](#))
20. Go to a gym, or work out at home.

21. Go for a walk, and smile, nod, or say hi to at least 3 people you pass on the street.
22. Organize something in your house that needs it, like a drawer.
23. Do something kind for a friend.
24. Play music if you have an instrument.
25. Volunteer at a soup kitchen or homeless shelter for the day.
26. Visit an animal shelter.
27. Go somewhere public like a mall, museum, or populated park.
28. Bake cookies or another favorite food you like.
29. Try a new recipe.
30. Download a language app and start learning a new language.
31. Help someone you know who needs it.
32. Draw designs on yourself with washable markers.
33. Write a poem or story, or write in a journal.
34. Go to a playground and watch children.
35. Edit a photo or video.
36. Watch an engaging, or comforting, show.
37. Organize your closet.
38. Go see a movie with a friend, or by yourself.
39. Eat a treat and savor it.
40. Research volunteer opportunities and pursue one.
41. Do work or another task that needs completing.
42. Sing with music.
43. Do a small good deed for a stranger, for example, let someone go ahead of you in line, hold a door for someone.
44. Build something.
45. Take up a new hobby or research a cause that matters to you
 - a. Values & Strengths ([click here](#))
46. Buy and put on sticker tattoos.
47. Buy stickers.

48. Do breathing exercise or use other coping tools
 - a. Breathing Tools for Calm & Sleep ([click here](#))
 - b. Breathing Retraining For Trauma Survivors ([click here](#))
 - c. More Coping Skills for Pain & Suffering ([click here](#))
49. Play with or pet your pet.
50. Get a manicure/pedicure.
51. Listen to music (non-triggering).
52. Meditate.
53. Call up an old friend or current one, and catch up.
54. Work on a website or start a new one.
55. Get your laundry done and/or clean up.
56. Write down your values and strengths
 - a. Identify Your Strengths & Virtues ([click here](#))
 - b. Values List ([click here](#))
57. Listen to a podcast on a non-triggering topic.
58. Chew gum (while doing another activity on the list).
59. Color, paint, or draw.
60. Make a video.
61. Let yourself cry if you need to. Hug a pillow or a stuffed animal.
 - a. Relieve Pain & Suffering ([click here](#))
62. Pop bubble wrap and do another activity on this list.
63. Dance along with music.
64. Make hot chocolate, herbal tea, or another hot, non-stimulating beverage
65. Paint your fingernails and toenails a new color.
66. Play with play dough.
67. Count backwards from 100 by 7s or another number, then do another activity.
68. Buy bubbles and blow bubbles
 - a. Breathing Tools for Calm & Sleep ([click here](#))

b. Breathing Retraining For Trauma Survivors ([click here](#))

69. Hug yourself. Then do another activity on the list.
 - a. Coping Skills for Pain & Suffering ([click here](#))
70. Write down “I like/love myself because” letter and keep it. Read it when you feel down.
71. Go for a drive (only if you’re grounded and safe), walk, or jog.
72. Complete something you have been putting off.
73. Go to [code.org](#) and learn basic coding.
74. Create something: knit, sew or crafts.
75. Make a list of what you’re grateful for.
76. Reach out to someone you trust for help.
77. Go for a bike ride.
78. Take a bath or schedule a massage.
79. Start an herb, or vegetable garden.
80. Re-arrange your room.
81. Draw on the walls with removable markers or crayons, or paint with washable watercolors.
82. Try on clothes and put together outfits.
83. Go through your closet and donate items you have not worn in a long time and/or don’t really like.
84. Attend a lecture.
85. Look up the words, and sing, along with a music video of a song (non-trigggering) you like.
86. Go to a pet store to visit the animals and fish.
87. Come up with baby names.
88. Go to a public place and people watch. Assign names in your mind that fit the people you see.
89. Make a playlist of your favorite songs.
90. Go shopping at a store.
91. Color in an online coloring book or get a paper one and color.

92. Go somewhere to listen to live music.
 93. Think about and write down what you want to achieve, do and have in your life. Only include things within reason and things that are within your control.
 - a. Values List ([click here](#))
 94. Alphabetize your books.
 95. Take up self-defense or another martial art.
 96. Do puzzles.
 97. Take an online course.
 98. Do yoga, or find and go to a yoga class.
 99. Attend a meetup.
 100. Visit a museum online.
-

Some Items Adapted from Adolescent Self-Injury Foundation

Reference:

Adolescent Self-Injury Foundation. (n.d.). 146 ideas to do besides self-harm [PDF].
https://www.adolescentselfinjuryfoundation.com/_files/ugd/99208f_0590ef6239d145979ca88768d43e97c2.pdf?index=true

This content is adapted for educational purposes only. It summarizes and interprets publicly available educational material.