

## Everything Is Awful and I'm Not Okay: Try these steps before self-harming or suicide

### **Are you hydrated?**

If not, have a glass of water.

### **Have you eaten in the past three hours?**

If not, get some food — something with protein, not just simple carbs. Perhaps some nuts or hummus?

### **Have you showered in the past day?**

If not, take a shower right now.

### **Have you stretched your legs in the past day?**

If not, do so right now. If you don't have the energy for a run or trip to the gym, just walk around the block, then keep walking as long as you please. If the weather's bad, go on a brisk walk through the local shopping centre.

### **Have you said something nice to someone in the past day?**

Do so, whether online or in person. Make it genuine; wait until you see something really nice about someone and tell them about it.

### **Have you moved your body to music in the past day?**

If not, jog for the length of a song at your favourite tempo, or just dance around the room for the length of an upbeat song. It may feel dumb at first but let yourself flow and do it anyway.

### **Have you cuddled a living being in the past day?**

If not, do so. Don't be afraid to ask for hugs from family, family pets, friends or friends' pets. Most of them will enjoy the cuddles too; you're not imposing on them.

### **If daytime: are you dressed?**

If not, put on clean clothes that aren't pajamas. Something you like.

### **If nighttime: are you sleepy and fatigued but resisting going to sleep? Or not sleepy but you ought to rest?**

Put on pyjamas, make yourself cosy in bed with the sound of falling rain or the sea or something soothing. (Try the free app White Noise.) Close your eyes, do a few long, slow deep breaths to settle your breathing (remember to exhale fully), and stay there for 20 minutes — no electronic screens allowed. If you're still awake after that, you can get up again, no pressure.

### **Have you tried strategies from your ‘toolkit’?**

Here are some common things other people have said helped them:

- holding ice
- talking to someone (get family member, phone a friend, phone a helpline)
- taking a cold shower
- listening to music
- sucking on a strong peppermint
- touching different textures
- cuddling a teddy bear
- going for a walk or run
- doing an art or craft activity

### **Do you feel ineffective?**

Pause right now and get something small completed, whether it’s responding to an e-mail, loading up the dishwasher, or organising your things for your next venture out of the house. Good job!

### **Do you feel paralysed by indecision?**

Give yourself ten minutes to sit back and figure out a game plan for the day. If a particular decision or problem is still being a roadblock, simply set it aside for now, and pick something else that seems doable. Right now, the important part is to break through that stasis, even if it means doing something trivial.

### **Have you over-exerted yourself lately — physically, emotionally, socially, or intellectually?**

That can take a toll that lingers for days. Give yourself a break in that area, whether it’s physical rest, taking time alone or relaxing with some silly entertainment.

### **Have you waited a week?**

Sometimes our perception of life is skewed, and we can’t even tell that we’re not thinking clearly, and there’s no obvious external cause. It happens. Keep yourself going for a full week, whatever it takes, and see if you still feel the same way then.

### **If you feel immediately suicidal**

Please tell someone how you feel (for example, family member, friend, school counsellor). Your brain is stuck and feeling hopeless and it’s not able to tell you the truth of things. Get an outside perspective. Ask them to stay with you until you get help. Being with someone, even over the phone, increases your safety or if that’s not possible then... **Contact a medical professional and tell them it is an emergency and/or emergency services:**

- **Call 000 – the police or ambulance may be able to take you to hospital**
- Call your local hospital and ask to speak to the Mental Health Team
- Go to your GP or hospital emergency department – wait there until you see a doctor

### **Call an appropriate crisis Helpline**

Lifeline Telephone Counselling Service: call 13 11 14 <https://www.lifeline.org.au/>

Kids Helpline (5–25-year-olds): call 1800 55 1800 <https://kidshelpline.com.au/>

SANE Australia: call 1800 187 263 <https://www.sane.org/get-help>

Suicide Callback Service: 1300 659 467 <https://www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au/>

A crisis assessment and treatment team (CATT) provides immediate help during a mental health crisis. Help is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They really are there to help, do trust their kindness and skills.

Mental Health Crisis Team - <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/crisis-management>

**ACT** - 1800 629 354 FREE Mental Health Triage Service

**NSW** - 1800 011 511 FREE Mental Health Line

**NT** - 1800 682 288 Northern Territory Crisis Assessment Telephone Triage Service

**QLD** - 1300 MH CALL (1300 64 22 55) FREE 24-hour specialist mental healthcare

**SA** - 13 14 65 FREE Mental Health Triage Service

**TAS** - 1800 332 388 FREE Mental Health Services Helpline

**VIC** - 1300 363 746 FREE Psychiatric triage (information, assessment and referral) 24/7

**WA** - 1800 676 822 FREE Mental Health Emergency Response Line

Stay here; stay safe. You've made it this far. You can make it through.

**You are stronger than you think.**

*Please note: No two people are the same; please customise this document to your own needs/circumstances. This document is only meant for support and should not be substituted for professional and medical treatment.*