



Cognitive Distraction Techniques

Mental Tasks

- Count backwards from 100 by 7s or 9s
- Name as many animals, cities, or foods as possible in 1 minute
- Spell words backwards
- Do simple mental maths or puzzles

Imagery

- Visualise a calm or safe place in detail
- Imagine placing distressing thoughts into a container and setting it aside
- Picture a peaceful scene and explore it in your mind

Language-Based Distraction

- Silently describe what you are doing step by step
- Read something neutral or mildly engaging
- Repeat a grounding phrase (e.g., "I am safe right now")

Attention Switching

- Watch a familiar TV show or short video
- Listen to music and focus on lyrics or instruments
- Do a brief task (tidying, organising, cooking)

Helpful Tips

- Practice techniques when calm so they're easier during distress
 - Keep a short list of go-to distractions
 - Combine mental and physical distraction if needed
 - Avoid distractions that increase stress (e.g. doom scrolling)
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