

Self-Harm Substitutes

What to do Instead....

Angry, frustrated, restless?

- Slash an empty plastic soda bottle, piece of cardboard, old shirt or sock.
- Flatten aluminum cans for recycling, seeing how fast you can go
- Hit a punching bag
- Use a pillow to hit a wall, pillow-fight style
- Rip up an old newspaper or phone book
- Make a lot of noise, either with an instrument, banging on pots, or popping balloons
- On a sketch or photo of yourself, mark in red ink where you want to cut
- Make Play-Doh sculptures and cut or smash them
- Throw ice against something hard enough to shatter it
- Crank up some music and dance
- Do something physical, like a run, walk, clean, or play a sport

Sad, depressed, unhappy?

- Do something slow and soothing, like taking a hot bath
- Light sweet-smelling incense
- Listen to soothing music
- Smooth body lotion into the parts of yourself you want to hurt
- Call or visit a friend and talk about things that you like
- Write negative feelings on a piece of paper and then tear or crumple it up
- Keep a journal
- Scribble on a piece of paper with a red crayon or pen
- Do something creative such as a collage or artwork

Craving sensation, feeling unreal?

- Squeeze ice cubes hard.
- Rub liniment under your nose.
- Slap a tabletop hard.
- Take a cold bath.
- Snap your wrist with a rubber band.
- Focus on how it feels to breathe. Notice how your body moves.

Wanting to see blood?

- Draw on yourself with a red felt-tip pen or red lipstick.
- Take a small bottle of red food coloring and warm it in a cup of hot water for a few minutes. Uncap the bottle and press its tip against the place you want to cut. Draw the bottle in a cutting motion while squeezing it slightly to let the food color trickle out.
- Draw on the areas you want to cut using ice that you've made with red food coloring.