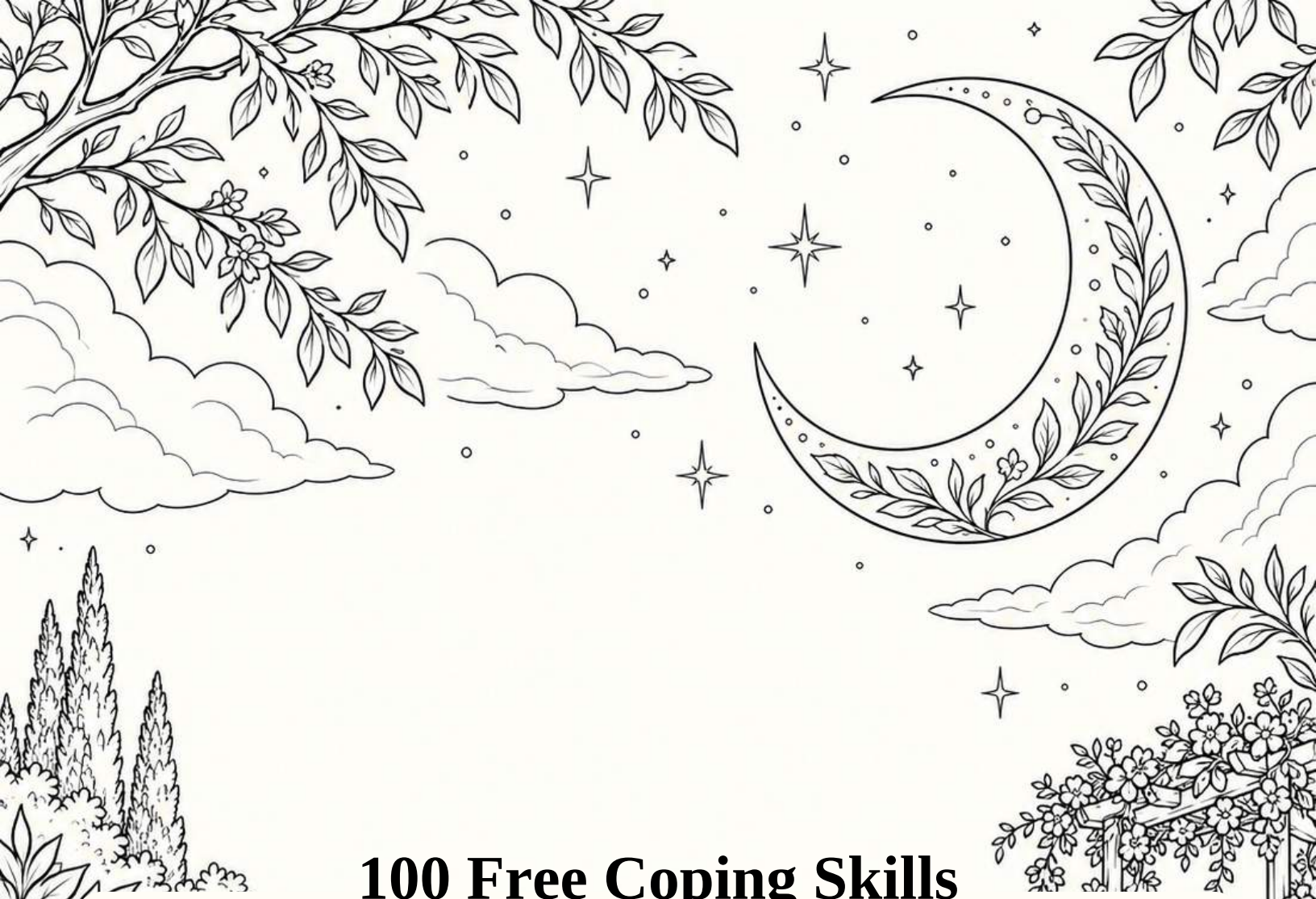


100 Free Coping Skills

A practical, gentle checklist organized by time and type

Use this guide like a menu, not a test. Choose one skill that fits your time, body, access, culture, and beliefs. A skill does not have to remove a feeling to be useful; helping even one percent counts.

Educational wellness resource. Not therapy, diagnosis, medical advice, or emergency care. If you may hurt yourself or someone else, contact local emergency services or a crisis service in your country now.

How to use this guide

Coping is not about pretending everything is positive. It is about helping your body and mind get enough steadiness, choice, or support to move through the next part of the day. Use this guide as a menu: notice what is happening, choose one response, try it gently, and check what changed.

1. Notice	What is strongest right now: racing thoughts, heavy emotion, physical tension, numbness, loneliness, exhaustion, or practical overwhelm?
2. Choose	Pick a skill that matches your current capacity. During high stress, simpler is usually better. You do not need to choose the perfect skill.
3. Try	Give the skill a clear beginning and end. One minute, one song, five breaths, or one small action is enough for a first attempt.
4. Check	Ask: Did anything shift by even one point? Do I need a different skill, a basic need, another person, or professional support?

Choose by what you need

If you feel...	Start with...
Panicky, restless, or activated	Orient to the room, use steady pressure, move safely, or lengthen the exhale without holding your breath.
Numb, frozen, or far away	Use temperature, texture, light movement, familiar music, or a simple true statement about the present.
Sad, lonely, or discouraged	Choose warmth, nourishment, a safe person, meaningful words, or one compassionate sentence.
Overthinking or stuck	Write the facts, contain the worry, make a tiny decision, or do one concrete sensory task.
Exhausted or overloaded	Meet a basic need, reduce stimulation, choose a low-energy option, ask for help, or rest without adding another task.

If the first skill does not help

That does not mean you failed. A coping skill may be the wrong match, may need more time, or may be too small for what you are carrying. Try one of these next steps:

- Make it smaller: shorten the practice or choose one physical action.
- Change the type: move from thinking to body support, or from doing alone to connection.
- Check basic needs: food, water, medication as prescribed, sleep, temperature, pain, privacy, and safety.
- Reduce the goal: aim for safer, steadier, or less alone rather than instantly calm or happy.
- Add support: contact a trusted person, clinician, community resource, or crisis service when the situation is bigger than self-help.

Before	After one skill	What next?
Intensity 0-10: _____ What I notice: _____	Intensity 0-10: _____ What changed: _____	[ ] Continue [ ] Switch [ ] Rest [ ] Reach out

Accessibility and choice

Every movement can be made smaller or done seated. Breathing practices should stay comfortable; stop if you feel dizzy or more distressed. Skip imagery, touch, sound, scent, or body-focused practices that feel uncomfortable. You may substitute a culturally familiar, spiritually meaningful, or completely secular practice that supports the same need. Your choice matters.

A positive experience can be quiet and realistic

Sometimes the helpful outcome is not feeling good. It may be feeling more present, less alone, able to drink water, able to wait before reacting, or able to ask for help. Those shifts count.

In 30 seconds or less

Tiny resets for the moment you are in

[ ]	**1. Name five things**	Look around and quietly name five things you can see. Let your eyes pause on each one.
[ ]	**2. Unclench**	Soften your jaw, lower your shoulders, and let your tongue rest. Notice one small change.
[ ]	**3. Long exhale**	Breathe in comfortably, then make the exhale a little longer. Repeat two times without forcing.
[ ]	**4. Feet on the floor**	Press both feet down and notice the support beneath you. Say, 'I am here right now.'
[ ]	**5. Temperature cue**	Hold a cool glass or warm mug and focus on the temperature for three breaths.
[ ]	**6. Orient to safety**	Turn your head slowly and find one neutral or comforting object in the room.
[ ]	**7. One kind sentence**	Tell yourself what you would tell someone you care about in this same moment.
[ ]	**8. Hand to heart**	Place a hand where it feels comfortable and notice the warmth and gentle pressure.
[ ]	**9. Choose one word**	Name your present feeling with one word. If unsure, try tired, tense, sad, angry, or okay.
[ ]	**10. Sip slowly**	Take one sip of water and pay attention to the movement from cup to mouth to swallow.

In 1 to 3 minutes

Short practices when you need a little room

[ ]	**11. Box breathing**	Inhale for four, pause for four, exhale for four, pause for four. Shorten the count if needed.
[ ]	**12. Butterfly hug**	Cross your arms over your chest and alternate gentle taps on each shoulder for 30 to 60 seconds.
[ ]	**13. Wall push**	Place your palms on a wall and push steadily for ten seconds. Release slowly and notice your muscles.
[ ]	**14. Count one color**	Choose a color and count every item of that color you can see around you.
[ ]	**15. Hum a steady note**	Hum softly on the exhale. Feel the vibration in your chest, lips, or face.
[ ]	**16. Three true things**	Say three simple truths: where you are, what day it is, and what you will do next.
[ ]	**17. Palm tracing**	Trace around each finger with the other hand, breathing in as you move up and out as you move down.
[ ]	**18. Shake and settle**	Gently shake your hands and arms for 20 seconds, then become still and notice the contrast.
[ ]	**19. Permission slip**	Write: 'For the next two minutes, I do not have to solve everything.' Read it twice.
[ ]	**20. Look toward daylight**	Stand near a window or step outside and let your eyes rest on the farthest safe point you can see.

In 5 minutes

Practical ways to shift your state

[ ]	**21. Five-four-three-two-one**	Name 5 things you see, 4 you feel, 3 you hear, 2 you smell, and 1 you taste.
[ ]	**22. Make a comfort list**	Write five things that usually help even one percent. Circle the easiest one for today.
[ ]	**23. Change the room**	Open a curtain, adjust the light, or move one object so the space feels easier to be in.
[ ]	**24. Step outside**	Notice the air, sky, and ground. Walk only as far as feels comfortable and safe.
[ ]	**25. Wash your hands mindfully**	Notice the water temperature, scent, bubbles, and movement. Return attention when it wanders.
[ ]	**26. Music reset**	Play one song that matches what you need: soothing, steadying, energizing, or validating.
[ ]	**27. Write without editing**	Set a five-minute timer and write whatever is present. Stop when the timer ends.
[ ]	**28. Tidy one surface**	Choose one small surface. Remove trash, return items, and stop when the space is usable.
[ ]	**29. Stretch three places**	Slowly stretch your neck, shoulders, and hands. Stay in a comfortable range; pain means stop.
[ ]	**30. Text a safe person**	Send: 'I am having a hard moment. You do not need to fix it; can you say hello?'

In 10 to 15 minutes

A little more time for regulation and care

[ ]	**31. Take a sensory walk**	Walk slowly and notice one sight, sound, texture, scent, and body sensation.
[ ]	**32. Make a warm drink ritual**	Prepare a drink slowly, noticing each step. Sit down for the first three sips.
[ ]	**33. Progressive muscle release**	Tense and release one area at a time, starting with hands and moving upward. Never strain.
[ ]	**34. Guided rest**	Set a timer, lie or sit comfortably, and follow a short body scan or calming audio.
[ ]	**35. Brain dump and sort**	Write every task down. Mark each as now, later, ask for help, or let go.
[ ]	**36. Make something simple**	Doodle, color, fold paper, knit, or arrange objects. Focus on process, not quality.
[ ]	**37. Shower reset**	Let the water be a transition. Name what you are leaving behind and what you want to carry forward.
[ ]	**38. Prepare an easy snack**	Combine something with energy and something satisfying, such as toast and nut butter.
[ ]	**39. Practice paced breathing**	Breathe in gently for four and out for six for five rounds. Return to normal if lightheaded.
[ ]	**40. Read a few pages**	Choose familiar or comforting writing. Stop after ten minutes even if your focus wandered.

Body-based support

Ways to work with activation, numbness, or restlessness

[ ]	**41. Push and release**	Press your hands together for five seconds, release for ten, and repeat three times.
[ ]	**42. Weighted comfort**	Use a blanket or pillow for gentle pressure. Make sure breathing and movement remain easy.
[ ]	**43. Rock or sway**	Rock in a chair or sway while standing with support. Choose a slow, predictable rhythm.
[ ]	**44. March in place**	March gently for one minute, noticing each foot contact. Slow down before stopping.
[ ]	**45. Self-massage**	Rub lotion into your hands or massage your forearms with comfortable pressure.
[ ]	**46. Temperature shift**	Splash cool water on your face or hold a warm washcloth. Avoid extreme temperatures.
[ ]	**47. Stretch against a doorway**	Rest your forearms on a doorway and lean forward slightly to open the chest.
[ ]	**48. Rest legs up**	Lie down with calves on a chair for five minutes if this position is comfortable for your body.
[ ]	**49. Dance for one song**	Choose a song and move in any way that feels safe, including seated movement.
[ ]	**50. Eat something steadying**	If you have not eaten, choose a simple food you tolerate and eat without rushing.

Thought and emotion support

Make room for feelings without letting them run the whole day

[ ]	**51. Name the story**	Write the thought, then add: 'My mind is telling me...' Notice the small amount of distance.
[ ]	**52. Check the facts**	List what you know, what you assume, and what information is still missing.
[ ]	**53. Both-and statement**	Try: 'This is difficult, and I can take one small next step.'
[ ]	**54. Set a worry appointment**	Write the worry down and choose a 10-minute time later to revisit it.
[ ]	**55. Rate the intensity**	Give the feeling a 0-to-10 number. Check again after using one coping skill.
[ ]	**56. Find the need**	Ask whether you need rest, food, space, information, movement, comfort, or connection.
[ ]	**57. Write the unsent message**	Say what you need to say on paper. Do not send it while emotionally activated.
[ ]	**58. Offer validation**	Complete: 'It makes sense that I feel ___ because ___. I do not have to judge it.'
[ ]	**59. Choose the next right inch**	Shrink the problem until the next action can be done in five minutes or less.
[ ]	**60. Imagine a container**	Picture placing the concern in a box or on a shelf until you choose to return to it.

Connection and support

You do not have to carry every moment alone

[ ]	**61. Ask for company**	Invite someone to sit, walk, or stay on the phone without needing to discuss the problem.
[ ]	**62. Use a clear request**	Say what would help: listening, practical help, distraction, reassurance, or space.
[ ]	**63. Send a low-pressure message**	Text a photo, meme, or simple 'thinking of you' when words feel hard.
[ ]	**64. Sit near safe people**	Spend time in a library, cafe, park, or shared room where you can be around others quietly.
[ ]	**65. Reach out professionally**	Contact a counselor, doctor, support group, or trusted community helper when more support is needed.
[ ]	**66. Pet or animal connection**	If safe and welcome, spend a few minutes stroking, brushing, or sitting near an animal.
[ ]	**67. Parallel task**	Ask someone to stay on video or phone while each of you completes a small task.
[ ]	**68. Share one honest sentence**	Try: 'Today is heavier than usual, and I could use some patience.'
[ ]	**69. Receive without fixing**	Let someone offer a meal, ride, or kind word. Practice saying only, 'Thank you.'
[ ]	**70. Plan the next check-in**	Choose a person and a specific time to reconnect so support does not depend on remembering later.

Comfort and environment

Create cues of safety, warmth, and steadiness

[ ]	**71. Make a comfort corner**	Gather a blanket, water, tissues, charger, and one calming object in an easy-to-reach place.
[ ]	**72. Soften the lighting**	Turn off harsh overhead lights and use daylight or a warm lamp if available.
[ ]	**73. Reduce one noise**	Close a door, lower a device, or use ear protection while staying aware of safety.
[ ]	**74. Choose a grounding scent**	Smell soap, tea, herbs, or lotion briefly. Skip scent if it causes discomfort.
[ ]	**75. Change into comfortable clothes**	Choose fabric and fit that reduce irritation and help your body settle.
[ ]	**76. Make the bed inviting**	Straighten one corner, adjust the pillow, and place water nearby.
[ ]	**77. Use a familiar show**	Choose something predictable and gentle; set an episode limit if sleep is the goal.
[ ]	**78. Bring in nature**	Look at a tree, tend a plant, arrange a leaf, or place a nature image where you can see it.
[ ]	**79. Create a transition cue**	Light a safe candle alternative, play one song, or wash your face to mark a shift in the day.
[ ]	**80. Prepare tomorrow's first step**	Set out one needed item so the morning asks less of you.

Meaning, mindfulness, and intention

Inclusive practices for reconnecting with what matters

[ ]	**81. Set a gentle intention**	Choose one word such as steady, kind, open, protected, clear, or enough.
[ ]	**82. Three gratitudes without pressure**	Name three specific things that helped today, even if they were very small.
[ ]	**83. Quiet observation**	Watch clouds, candlelight, rain, or leaves for five minutes without needing to interpret anything.
[ ]	**84. Release ritual**	Write one burden on scrap paper and tear it up or recycle it as a symbol of setting it down.
[ ]	**85. Protective boundary visualization**	Imagine a calm boundary around you that lets care in and keeps unnecessary pressure out.
[ ]	**86. Read meaningful words**	Choose a poem, prayer, affirmation, or passage consistent with your own beliefs and values.
[ ]	**87. Make a tiny offering of care**	Water a plant, refill a bird dish, or place something beautiful where others may enjoy it.
[ ]	**88. Notice a cycle**	Observe the moon, weather, season, or time of day and remember that states naturally change.
[ ]	**89. Values check**	Ask: 'What kind of person do I want to be in the next ten minutes?' Choose one doable action.
[ ]	**90. Closing phrase**	End the day with: 'I did what I could with what I had. Tomorrow can begin tomorrow.'

Planning for harder moments

Prepare supports before you need them

[ ]	**91. Build a coping menu**	Choose three quick, three medium, and three longer skills from this guide and save the list.
[ ]	**92. Pack a grounding kit**	Include water, a snack, medication if prescribed, a sensory object, and support contacts.
[ ]	**93. Identify warning signs**	Write three early signs that stress is rising, such as racing thoughts, withdrawal, or tense shoulders.
[ ]	**94. Make an if-then plan**	Write: 'If I notice ___, then I will ___.' Keep the action small and specific.
[ ]	**95. Reduce decisions**	Create a short list of reliable meals, clothes, places, and contacts for low-energy days.
[ ]	**96. Save support numbers**	Put trusted people and local professional or crisis resources in your phone before a crisis.
[ ]	**97. Create a pause rule**	Decide which choices you will delay when highly activated, such as sending messages or making purchases.
[ ]	**98. Plan a gentle exit**	Before an event, decide how you can leave, take a break, or ask for help if overwhelmed.
[ ]	**99. Review what helped**	After the moment passes, write what made it even slightly easier. Keep what worked.
[ ]	**100. Choose compassionate follow-up**	Plan food, rest, hydration, or connection after a demanding experience instead of expecting instant recovery.

Supportive knowledge to carry with you

Trauma-informed choice

You control the pace. Keep your eyes open, move less, change the language, or stop. You never need to describe a traumatic experience to use grounding or coping support.

A one-minute mindful pause

Notice one point of support beneath you. Name three neutral things you see, one sound you hear, and one sensation you can tolerate. Ask what would support the next few minutes.

Believable affirmations

Try: 'I can take one step at a time.' 'My needs and boundaries matter.' 'I am allowed to pause.' 'I can ask for support.' Edit the words until they feel honest rather than forced.

Practical tips and helpful combinations

Skills often work better in pairs: grounding plus water, movement plus music, rest plus a clear boundary, reflection plus connection, or a practical action plus professional support. Track what helps your particular body and circumstances.

When a worksheet is not enough

Seek qualified professional support when distress is intense, persistent, worsening, affecting daily functioning, or connected with safety concerns. In immediate danger, contact local emergency services or a crisis service available in your country.

My personal coping menu

Choose a few options now so you do not have to search for them during a hard moment.

A 30-second skill I can use:

A five-minute skill I can use:

A body-based skill I can use:

A person I can contact:

A comfort I can prepare:

One sign I need more support:

A gentle reminder

Coping is not a moral achievement. Some days the most supportive action is resting, asking for help, changing the plan, or using professional care. You deserve support that respects your identity, circumstances, and choices.