

Pain coping techniques

Practice makes permanent.

Practice these techniques while doing the dishes, or after an argument, and they will become second nature over time and can be used in many situations to keep you grounded and calm. Remember to take one contraction at a time.

Ice Cube Contractions.

Cold is sensed by the same nerve fibers as pain, we will use ice cubes to imitate a contraction. Most contractions last about 1 minute and are followed by a 1-2 minute rest. Your partner can try these exercises too to gain some empathy... To make this more intense (to really put your skills to the test) you can use 2 ice cubes, one in each hand or held at the wrist or behind the ear. Your partner can help hold the ice cubes, (it can be good practice supporting someone you love while they are in pain...)

1. Baseline:

Squeeze the ice cube in your fist for 60 seconds. Focus all your attention on how cold the ice is, how much your hand hurts, whine and complain about it.

Discuss with the group what you noticed.

Rate the intensity of the pain 0 (barely noticeable) to 10 (intense/intolerable)

2. Breath Awareness:

Repeat a 60 second ice "contraction" but this time focus all your attention on your breath.

Notice when exhalation begins and stops.

Try breathing out slowly and slightly forcefully.

Breathe in and out of your nose.

What does your stomach feel like when you breathe.

If you want to escape or stop, refocus to your breath.

Discuss with the group: rate 0-10, compare to first experience, better, worse, what seemed different.

3. Add Imagination to Breath:

Repeat another "contraction" this time as you exhale, add images.

Imagine a flower slowly opening

Watch waves rise and fall away as you breathe in and out

Picture your breath like wind through tall pines

Discuss with the group. Rate 0-10 What was different? Better, worse, harder, easier.