



DBT-MIND · FREE PRINTABLE

The STOP Skill

A four-step pause between a strong urge and what you do next. It takes seconds and keeps a hard moment from getting worse.

DISTRESS TOLERANCE · USE THE MOMENT AN URGE HITS



The four steps

S Stop

Freeze. Don't speak, don't send, don't move toward the urge. Put the phone down. The emotion says "now"; for a few seconds, you do nothing at all.

Say it to yourself: "Stop."

T Take a step back

Create distance. Take one slow breath, step away from the screen or the person, leave the room if you need to. You are buying time, not giving up.

One long out-breath counts.

O Observe

Notice what is going on inside you (body, emotion, urge, thoughts) and around you (what actually happened, what others are doing). Stick to facts, not the story your mind is telling.

"I notice anger at 8. I notice the urge to yell."

P Proceed mindfully

Ask what you want from this situation and which action makes it better, not worse. Then choose on purpose, with your goals in mind, instead of letting the urge choose.

"What will I be glad I did tomorrow?"

Why it works: most regrettable actions happen in the first seconds of a strong emotion. STOP doesn't remove the feeling; it puts you back in charge of the next move. If intensity stays very high after the pause, follow with TIPP.

Know my moments (fill this in while you are calm)

Situations where I tend to react fast

The urge I most want to pause

Early signals in my body

My STOP cue (a word, a gesture, a phone wallpaper)

Practice log

Date	Situation	Urge	What I did instead	Helped? Y / partly / N



Practice this on your phone with the free DBT-Mind app.
Scan to download for iPhone or Android. Full guide: dbt-mind.com/guides/stop-skill

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