

MENTAL HEALTH SKILLS & RECOVERY SERIES

PAUSE BEFORE YOU REACT

The HALT Method Workbook

H

HUNGRY

A

ANGRY

L

LONELY

T

TIRED

Notice a need. Choose one safe next step.

For personal reflection and clinician-guided skill practice

2026 Edition

Your Safety Comes First

A note about your well-being

This workbook offers education, self-reflection and coping practice. It does not replace mental health assessment, diagnosis, counseling, therapy or medical treatment.

You may skip a question, pause the activity, or ask a clinician or support person for help. Your feelings do not have to improve immediately for a small step to be worthwhile.

CRISIS SUPPORT — UNITED STATES

For overwhelming emotional distress, suicidal thoughts, or a mental health crisis, call or text 988. If someone is in immediate danger or there is a life-threatening emergency, call 911 or seek emergency medical care.

If you are in a clinic, tell a staff member right away when you need urgent help. If you may hurt yourself or someone else, do not use this worksheet in place of immediate assistance.

Use this workbook in a way that works for you

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Write short answers or one word | ☐ Ask someone to read aloud |
| ☐ Work with your clinician | ☐ Skip questions that feel too much |

Your safety matters more than the worksheet

HALT is a brief self-check—not an assessment of crisis risk. If you cannot remain safe, seek immediate support rather than trying to complete every step.

What Is HALT?

HALT is a simple reminder to check four everyday needs when stress or an urge feels intense.

H**Hungry**

Does my body need food, water, or basic care?

A**Angry**

Am I hurt, frustrated, afraid, or facing a boundary issue?

L**Lonely**

Do I need safe connection, listening, or support?

T**Tired**

Do I need rest, quiet, or fewer demands?

Keep the meaning realistic

HALT is a practical self-awareness tool commonly used in recovery settings. It does not explain every difficult feeling or craving, and it is not a replacement for treatment.

More than one need may be present. Sometimes none of these four fits. That is useful information too: seek other explanations or professional support when needed.

How to Use HALT

Pause. Check your needs. Take one manageable action. Re-check.

1. PAUSE

Notice what is happening before you text, argue, leave, shut down, or make a quick decision.

2. CHECK

Ask whether you are hungry, angry, lonely, or tired. You may notice more than one.

3. CHOOSE

Start with one need you can respond to safely. You do not need to solve everything.

4. ACT

Try a snack if appropriate, a respectful break, supportive contact, or quiet rest.

5. RE-CHECK

Notice what has changed, what has not, and whether you need more support.

Example

I want to send an angry message after feeling ignored. I realize I have not eaten and I am exhausted. I get something to eat, take a break, and decide whether I still want to send a clearer message.

H — Hungry

Hunger and hydration

Feeling hungry or thirsty can make a difficult moment harder. Check body needs without judging yourself.

What might fit right now?

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ I skipped food today | ☐ I feel thirsty |
| ☐ I notice shakiness | ☐ I need a break to eat |
| ☐ I am unsure what my body needs | ☐ Eating is difficult right now |

Possible next steps

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Water or a suitable snack | ☐ Ask for food access/support |
| ☐ Follow my medical or nutrition plan | ☐ Rest and reassess |

What do I notice about this need?

What is one safe action I could try?

A — Angry

Anger and boundaries

Anger can signal frustration, hurt, fear, unfairness, or a need for boundaries. A feeling is not a command to act.

What might fit right now?

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ I feel hurt | ☐ I feel disrespected |
| ☐ I feel afraid | ☐ I want to argue |
| ☐ I need a boundary | ☐ I need space |

Possible next steps

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Step away safely | ☐ Lower the pressure to respond |
| ☐ Name the need without threats | ☐ Ask staff or a trusted person for help |

What do I notice about this need?

What is one safe action I could try?

L — Lonely

Connection and support

Loneliness can involve isolation, feeling unseen, or needing connection. One low-pressure contact may help.

What might fit right now?

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ I feel alone | ☐ I feel ignored |
| ☐ I am withdrawing | ☐ I want someone to listen |
| ☐ I need professional support | ☐ I want quiet company |

Possible next steps

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Text or call a safe person | ☐ Ask staff for a check-in |
| ☐ Spend time in a welcoming space | ☐ Use a support line if needed |

What do I notice about this need?

What is one safe action I could try?

T — Tired

Rest and overload

Tiredness may be physical, mental, emotional, or sensory. Rest or reduced demands can help, but exhaustion can have other causes.

What might fit right now?

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ I slept poorly | ☐ My mind is overloaded |
| ☐ I need quiet | ☐ I need fewer decisions |
| ☐ I feel physically depleted | ☐ I may need medical care |

Possible next steps

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Take a short rest | ☐ Reduce noise or screen time |
| ☐ Ask for help with demands | ☐ Postpone nonurgent choices |

What do I notice about this need?

What is one safe action I could try?

Start Here: My Current Moment

Short answers are enough. You can complete these pages with support.

My current distress or urge intensity (0-10)

0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐

What is happening right now?

What do I feel tempted to do?

What I am noticing

☐ Anxious

☐ Sad

☐ Exhausted

☐ Craving

☐ Angry

☐ Lonely

☐ Overstimulated

☐ Unsure

What help might I need before continuing?

My HALT Check-In

You can check more than one need—or none of them.

H — What food, water, or body care do I need?

A — What feeling, boundary, or safety concern needs attention?

L — What safe connection or support would help?

T — What kind of rest or reduced demand might help?

Which need feels most important right now? Why?

Hungry: Take Care of My Body

Pick only what is safe and appropriate for your circumstances.

My current needs

☐ I need a drink

☐ I might need food

☐ I need to follow a medical plan

☐ I need access to food or water

What am I noticing in my body?

What body-care action is realistic and safe for me?

What changed or what support do I need?

Angry: Respond Without Harm

Pick only what is safe and appropriate for your circumstances.

My current needs

☐ I need a break

☐ I feel afraid or hurt

☐ I need a respectful boundary

☐ I need help staying safe

What happened and what did I feel?

What would I like someone to understand?

What can I say or do without threatening or harming?

Lonely: Reach Toward Support

Pick only what is safe and appropriate for your circumstances.

My current needs

☐ I need a listening ear

☐ I need company

☐ I need a professional

☐ I want a low-pressure check-in

Who or what could offer safe connection?

One sentence I could say to ask for support

If that person is unavailable, what is my backup?

Tired: Reduce the Load

Pick only what is safe and appropriate for your circumstances.

My current needs

☐ I need sleep

☐ I need quiet

☐ I need fewer decisions

☐ I need help with demands

What kind of tired am I experiencing?

What can wait until later?

What is one realistic reset I can try?

Choose One Next Step

Small actions count, whether or not the feeling changes.

The HALT need I will respond to first

One action I can take safely in the next few minutes

One action or conversation I can delay

Someone I can ask for help

What I want to remember while I pause

My distress or urge level after pausing (0-10)

0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐

One-Page HALT Practice

Use this shortened page whenever writing a longer worksheet feels like too much.

Before HALT: intensity (0-10)

0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐

H — Hungry: What do I need?

A — Angry: What needs attention?

L — Lonely: What support could help?

T — Tired: What rest might help?

My next safe step

After HALT: intensity (0-10)

0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐

Practice Log

HALT can be practiced during ordinary stress, not only during intense moments.

Practice 1: date / situation / HALT need / action / what changed

Practice 2: date / situation / HALT need / action / what changed

Practice 3: date / situation / HALT need / action / what changed

Practice 4: date / situation / HALT need / action / what changed

Patterns I am beginning to notice

What I would like to practice next

My Pocket HALT Reminder

Cut out either card or photograph it for future use.

HALT • PAUSE BEFORE YOU REACT

H Hungry — food, water, body care?

A Angry — feeling, hurt, boundary, safety?

L Lonely — connection or support?

T Tired — rest, quiet, fewer demands?

Choose one safe step. Re-check. Ask for help.

HALT • PAUSE BEFORE YOU REACT

H Hungry — food, water, body care?

A Angry — feeling, hurt, boundary, safety?

L Lonely — connection or support?

T Tired — rest, quiet, fewer demands?

Choose one safe step. Re-check. Ask for help.

In crisis?

In the U.S., call or text 988 for emotional crisis support. For immediate danger or life-threatening emergencies, call 911.

Credits and Additional Resources

Pause Before You React: The HALT Method Workbook

Author: Bobby Perrine

Original publication: Bodhi Life Balance

Edition: 2026 | Purpose: Psychoeducation and self-reflection for crisis and community mental health settings.

Additional Mental Health Workbooks

<https://bodhilifebalance.com/mental-health-workbooks>

Explore additional educational mental health workbooks at the website above.

Selected source material

SAMHSA (2023). TIP 65: Counseling Approaches To Promote Recovery From Problematic Substance Use and Related Issues. HALT self-check.

Cleveland Clinic (2022). HALT: Pay Attention to These Four Stressors on Your Recovery.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Anger Control Plan (HALT triggers and coping strategies).

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: <https://988lifeline.org/>

A practical reminder

HALT is an optional self-check. It does not diagnose, treat, or rule out physical or mental health conditions.