

BODHI LIFE BALANCE

Mental Health Workbooks

PAUSE BEFORE YOU REACT

The HALT Method Workbook

A simple self-check tool for anxiety, anger, urges, emotional flooding, and impulsive reactions.

Use this workbook when:

You feel reactive, overwhelmed, irritated, emotionally flooded, tempted to make a fast decision, or stuck in a craving, argument, spiral, or shutdown.

Safety note:

This workbook teaches a coping skill. It does not replace professional care. If you might hurt yourself or someone else, call 911, go to the nearest emergency room, or call or text 988 in the United States.

Name: _____ Date: _____

PART ONE

What Is the HALT Method?

A simple explanation you can use right away.

HALT is a quick self-check. It asks you to pause and look at four basic needs before you react, argue, isolate, use, quit, text, lash out, shut down, or make a decision from a flooded place.

The word HALT stands for Hungry, Angry, Lonely, and Tired. These four states can make emotions feel bigger, thoughts feel darker, cravings feel stronger, and choices feel more urgent. The method helps you ask, "What is really going on underneath this reaction?"

H	Hungry	Do I need food, water, or a steadier body?
A	Angry	Am I upset, hurt, irritated, scared, or feeling disrespected?
L	Lonely	Do I feel disconnected, unseen, unsupported, or isolated?
T	Tired	Do I need rest, sleep, quiet, or a break from stimulation?

The goal:

The goal is not to judge yourself or talk yourself out of your feelings. The goal is to slow down, identify the need, and choose one small stabilizing action before the moment gets bigger.

Why it works:

HALT works because many emotional storms get worse when the body is depleted, the mind feels threatened, the heart feels alone, or the nervous system needs rest. A basic need can look like a crisis when it is ignored long enough.

PART ONE

How to Use HALT in Real Life

Pause, check, choose, and re-check.

- 1. Pause:** Stop for a moment. Name that you are activated, tempted, upset, or overwhelmed.
- 2. Check HALT:** Ask, "Am I hungry, angry, lonely, or tired?" More than one answer can be true.
- 3. Choose one need:** Pick the strongest need first. Do not try to fix your whole life in one minute.
- 4. Take one small action:** Drink water, eat something, breathe, step away, reach out, rest, or ask for help.
- 5. Re-check:** After the action, ask, "What changed? What is my next safest step?"

Helpful phrase:

Try saying, "I need to HALT for a minute." This gives you permission to pause without needing to explain everything right away.

Example

Situation	I want to send an angry text after feeling ignored.
HALT check	I have not eaten, I feel hurt, and I am tired.
Small action	I drink water, eat something simple, and wait 20 minutes before texting.
Re-check	I am still upset, but I can write a clearer message instead of attacking.
Next step	I ask for a conversation instead of starting a fight by text.

Remember:

HALT does not mean your feelings are fake. It means your feelings may be louder because your system needs care.

H = HUNGRY

Hungry: What Is My Body or Emotion Asking For?

Check the need before you react to the feeling.

Simple idea:

Hunger and dehydration can make anxiety, anger, cravings, and sadness feel more intense. The first intervention may be basic body care.

Check what might be true right now:

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ I skipped a meal | ☐ I have had mostly caffeine or sugar |
| ☐ I feel shaky or lightheaded | ☐ I am thirsty |
| ☐ I feel irritable for no clear reason | ☐ My stomach feels empty or tense |
| ☐ I have not eaten enough protein or real food | ☐ I am making fast choices |

Small actions that may help:

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Drink water | ☐ Eat a small balanced snack |
| ☐ Step away before deciding | ☐ Avoid big conversations until steadier |
| ☐ Notice caffeine or sugar effects | ☐ Ask, "What does my body need?" |

What do I notice about hungry right now?**One small next step I can take is:**

A = ANGRY

Angry: What Is My Body or Emotion Asking For?

Check the need before you react to the feeling.

Simple idea:

Anger is often a signal that something feels threatened, unfair, painful, or unsafe. The skill is to listen without letting anger drive the whole car.

Check what might be true right now:

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ I feel disrespected | ☐ I feel hurt |
| ☐ I feel trapped | ☐ I feel scared |
| ☐ I want to prove a point | ☐ I want to punish someone |
| ☐ I am replaying the situation | ☐ My body feels hot, tight, or restless |

Small actions that may help:

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Take a slow breath | ☐ Step away if safe |
| ☐ Lower my voice | ☐ Write before speaking |
| ☐ Name the hurt underneath | ☐ Use movement to discharge energy |
| ☐ Delay sending the message | ☐ Ask for space respectfully |

What do I notice about angry right now?**One small next step I can take is:**

L = LONELY

Lonely: What Is My Body or Emotion Asking For?

Check the need before you react to the feeling.

Simple idea:

Loneliness can make small problems feel permanent and personal. Connection does not have to be dramatic. Sometimes one honest text is enough to interrupt the spiral.

Check what might be true right now:

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ I feel unseen or forgotten | ☐ I want someone to notice I am not okay |
| ☐ I am isolating | ☐ I am comparing myself to others |
| ☐ I feel like nobody understands | ☐ I want attention but feel ashamed asking |
| ☐ I am withdrawing from support | ☐ I am telling myself I do not matter |

Small actions that may help:

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Text a safe person | ☐ Sit near people without forcing conversation |
| ☐ Ask directly for support | ☐ Use a warm line or crisis line if needed |
| ☐ Do one belonging action | ☐ Remind myself loneliness is a state, not a verdict |

What do I notice about lonely right now?**One small next step I can take is:**

T = TIRED

Tired: What Is My Body or Emotion Asking For?

Check the need before you react to the feeling.

Simple idea:

Tired brains are not bad brains. They are depleted brains. When you are tired, your first job may be recovery, not problem-solving.

Check what might be true right now:

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ I slept poorly | ☐ I feel overstimulated |
| ☐ I am mentally exhausted | ☐ I am physically worn down |
| ☐ I am more emotional than usual | ☐ I cannot think clearly |
| ☐ I want to quit everything | ☐ I need quiet or reduced demands |

Small actions that may help:

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Take a short rest | ☐ Reduce stimulation |
| ☐ Postpone non-urgent decisions | ☐ Use a simple routine |
| ☐ Do one task only | ☐ Go to bed earlier if possible |
| ☐ Ask for help with demands | ☐ Take a quiet break |

What do I notice about tired right now?

One small next step I can take is:

PART TWO

Fillable Worksheet Section

Use these pages to guide yourself through HALT.

Before you begin:

Use short answers. Ordinary words are enough. The worksheet is not asking you to diagnose yourself. It is asking you to pause long enough to notice your needs.

My distress, craving, anger, or urge level before I start is:

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

0 = calm or manageable. 10 = highest distress or strongest urge.

What is happening right now?

Write one or two sentences about the situation, trigger, thought, urge, or emotion.

What am I tempted to do right now?

Examples: yell, isolate, use, quit, text, leave, shut down, keep arguing, avoid everything.

☐ Anxious

☐ Sad

☐ Embarrassed

☐ Overstimulated

☐ Hopeless

☐ Impulsive

☐ Angry

☐ Lonely

☐ Rejected

☐ Craving

☐ Numb

☐ Other: _____

HALT CHECK-IN

Step 1: Check the Four Needs*More than one answer can be true.***My HALT check:**

Prompt	Your answer
H - Hungry: What does my body need?	
A - Angry: What emotion, hurt, fear, or boundary is showing up?	
L - Lonely: What kind of support or connection do I need?	
T - Tired: What kind of rest, quiet, or relief do I need?	

The strongest HALT need right now appears to be:**How do I know this is the strongest need?**

HUNGRY

Step 2: Stabilize the Body

Start with basic body care when it applies.

☐ I need water

☐ I need protein or something steady

☐ I need to slow down eating

☐ I need food

☐ I need less caffeine

☐ I need to wait before reacting

What have I eaten or had to drink today?

One small body-care action I can take now is:

Examples: drink water, eat a snack, sit down, take medication as prescribed, reduce caffeine, wait 15 minutes.

After body care, what changed?

ANGRY

Step 3: Name the Emotion Under the Reaction

Anger often protects something tender.

☐ Hurt

☐ Scared

☐ Powerless

☐ Embarrassed

☐ Unfairness

☐ Disrespected

☐ Ignored

☐ Overloaded

☐ Violated boundary

☐ Loss of control

What is the anger trying to protect?

What would I say if I wanted to be clear instead of explosive?

One respectful boundary or request I can make is:

LONELY

Step 4: Choose One Connection Action

Connection can be small and still be real.

☐ I need to be heard

☐ I need reassurance

☐ I need company

☐ I need a safe person

☐ I need professional support

☐ I need to stop isolating

☐ I need spiritual or personal grounding

☐ I need to feel useful or connected

Who is one safe or supportive person, place, service, or community I can reach toward?

What could I say in one honest sentence?

Example: I am having a hard moment and I do not need fixing, but I could use a check-in.

If nobody is available, one safe backup support is:

Examples: 988, a warm line, crisis clinic, counselor, sponsor, support group, journaling, sitting in a public safe place.

TIRED

Step 5: Reduce the Load

Tired systems need fewer demands, not more shame.

☐ I need sleep

☐ I need a break from screens

☐ I need to postpone a conversation

☐ I need movement

☐ I need quiet

☐ I need fewer decisions

☐ I need help with a task

☐ I need to stop pushing so hard

What kind of tired am I experiencing?

Examples: physical, emotional, mental, social, spiritual, sensory, burnout, lack of sleep.

What can wait until later?

One realistic rest or reset action I can take is:

ACTION PLAN

Step 6: Choose the Next Right Thing*Pick one small move. Then re-check.***My next-step plan:**

Prompt	Your answer
The strongest HALT need is	
One action I will take in the next 5 minutes	
One action I will avoid until I am steadier	
One person, place, or resource I can use	
What I will tell myself while I wait for the intensity to lower	

My distress, craving, anger, or urge level after using HALT is:

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

0 = calm or manageable. 10 = highest distress or strongest urge.

What changed after I paused and checked HALT?**My next safest step is:**

QUICK VERSION

One-Page HALT Worksheet

Use this when you need the short version.

Before HALT, my intensity is:

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

0 = calm or manageable. 10 = highest distress or strongest urge.

Quick HALT round:

Prompt	Your answer
H - Hungry: What does my body need?	
A - Angry: What feeling or boundary needs attention?	
L - Lonely: What connection or support would help?	
T - Tired: What rest or relief do I need?	
The strongest need right now is	
One small action I will take is	

After HALT, my intensity is:

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

0 = calm or manageable. 10 = highest distress or strongest urge.

My next safest step:

PRACTICE LOG

Build the Pause Before You Need It*Practice makes the pause easier under stress.*

Date	Situation	Main HALT Need	Action Taken	After 0-10

Patterns I notice:**My personal HALT reminders:**

Examples: Eat before hard conversations. Do not text angry. Reach out before I isolate. Rest before I decide my life is falling apart.

CUTOUT CARD

The HALT Method

Keep this page near your desk, in a notebook, or on your phone.

HALT Pause Card

H - Hungry: Do I need food, water, or body care?

A - Angry: What hurt, fear, boundary, or emotion needs attention?

L - Lonely: What support, connection, or honesty do I need?

T - Tired: What rest, quiet, or relief does my system need?

Choose one small action. Then re-check before you react.

HALT Pause Card

H - Hungry: Do I need food, water, or body care?

A - Angry: What hurt, fear, boundary, or emotion needs attention?

L - Lonely: What support, connection, or honesty do I need?

T - Tired: What rest, quiet, or relief does my system need?

Choose one small action. Then re-check before you react.

Final reminder:

A pause is not weakness. It is self-leadership. Every time you HALT before reacting, you are practicing emotional regulation in real time.