

## If You Can't Resolve Your Pain, Mindfully Notice It

When you can't relieve the pain you feel, panic sets in. Your impulse is to react, but no reaction has worked, and now there's nothing else to try.

The upside? Reacting isn't always the best course of action for pain. By mindfully "sitting with" pain, resisting it less forcefully, you may feel less suffering.

Next time you have 10 free minutes, try the following exercise. It's a way to practice working with pain, instead of resisting it (which amplifies suffering).

**You'll need:** a couple of ice cubes in a bowl and a place to sit.

- 1 Grab an ice cube with one hand. Hold it until the sensation becomes too much, then put it down.  
How long would you say you held onto it? \_\_\_\_\_  
How intense was the discomfort? \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 Using your other hand, grab another ice cube: we're going to practice reacting to it differently.
- 3 Avoid resisting the discomfort. Try to relax any tension that arises. Dig deeper into the internal feeling of "NO"—describe to yourself exactly how the ice cube feels. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4 When you notice your discomfort, acknowledge the difficulty. But then remind yourself that you will be ok. It's just an ice cube.
- 5 When you can't take anymore, put down the ice again.  
How long would you say you held onto it? \_\_\_\_\_  
How intense was the discomfort? \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 What felt different when you didn't resist the cold as much? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Do see why Dr. Kristin Neff suggests that "Suffering = Pain x Resistance"??

\*This exercise inspired by concepts in *Self Compassion* by Kristin Neff, PhD.