



## DISTRESS TOLERANCE: ICE COLD WATER EXERCISE

This exercise can be completed with any cold water, but the sound and sight of naturally flowing water can enhance this experience quite a bit. If you're able to go to a body of water that is flowing, wonderful. If not, you can also use a faucet with running water or a drinking fountain. You can also get something cold and place it on a part of your body. Once you have determined the best way to access the sensation of cold water, place it on your face and/or wrists for at least 30 seconds. Pay close attention to the feeling of the water, the feeling of the cold. It's possible that this will be alarming at first. This is part of why it works for distress tolerance: it moves your attention from the experience of distress. Recall that this water comes from the earth, is part of the earth, as is the cold. We are held by this cold and our attention is directed by it. Such a redirection helps us and our bodies remember that we can adapt to all sorts of things: cold temperature, uncomfortable feelings and thoughts. We can be with them, and we can transform them with practice.

Notice how the rest of your body responds in the moments following this exercise. Do you feel parts of your body relax? What do you notice in your thoughts? Has your emotional state shifted? How so? Do you notice a difference between before the water and after? Describe it. If you're practicing with others, talk about the experience.