

# Mindfully Working with Pain: Self Compassion

Conduct this small experiment to observe how mindfulness and self-compassion can help us suffer less when we're in pain.

1. Hold an ice cube in your hand for several seconds (this will be mildly uncomfortable). Just react as you normally would, and put the ice cube down when the discomfort becomes overwhelming.
  - Notice how intense your discomfort was, and how long you could hold the ice cube before needing to put it down.
2. Hold an ice cube in your other hand for several seconds. This time, as you feel the discomfort, try not to resist it.
  - Relax around the sensation and allow it just to be.
  - Mindfully note the qualities of the sensation—cold, burning, tingling, and so on.
  - As you do so, give yourself compassion for any discomfort you feel. (For example, you might say “Ouch, this really hurts. It’s difficult to feel this sensation. But it’s okay, I’ll get through it.”)
  - Put the ice cube down when the discomfort becomes overwhelming.
  - Once again, notice how intense your discomfort was, and how long you could hold the ice cube.
3. After you’re done, compare the two experiences.
  - Did anything change when you didn’t resist the pain?
  - Were you able to hold the ice cube for a longer time?
  - Was your discomfort less intense?

Were you able to provide empirical support for the proposition that “Suffering = Pain x Resistance”?

The less you resist, the less you suffer.