



# Make a not-to-do list

You've probably heard about the power of saying no and the importance of setting healthy boundaries in your personal life and at work. A well-intentioned to-do list can be a great way to get organised and manage stress. But have you ever thought of creating a not-to-do list?

Making your own not-to-do list can help you identify what drains your mind, body and spirit. Here's a worksheet to get you started.

**Fill in each of the boxes with things, activities and/or people that frequently:**

Do not make me feel seen, supported, heard or safe:

Make me feel overwhelmed, agitated, anxious and/or stressed:

Make me feel undervalued:

Make me feel obligated:

Waste my time, drain my energy or that I simply do not enjoy:

Put me in a bad mood:

Cost too much time and/or money:

Now, re-read the list you made on the first page. Circle five things you can choose not to do anymore. Write them below.

**I am not going to:**

1 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Next, use those five statements and give yourself an affirmation as to what you can or will do instead and why.

**Instead, I will:**

1 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**For example:**

<p><b>I am not going to</b> spend time with _____. It's OK to turn down an invitation.</p> <p><b>I am not going to</b> agree to go home for Christmas next year. It's too expensive and stressful.</p>	<p><b>Instead, I will</b> use that time to exercise, which makes me feel good and is good for me.</p> <p><b>Instead, I will</b> arrange another time to visit my parents, such as after the Christmas rush when travel is cheaper.</p>
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**Sources:**

National Institute of Mental Health, "Caring for your Mental Health." <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/caring-for-your-mental-health> Accessed 19 January 2023

Harvard Business Review, "Why we continue to rely on (and love) to-do lists." <https://hbr.org/2022/01/why-we-continue-to-rely-on-and-love-to-do-lists> Accessed 19 January 2023

HelpGuide, "Setting Healthy Boundaries in Relationships." <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/relationships-communication/setting-healthy-boundaries-in-relationships.htm> Accessed 19 January 2023

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance, "8 Tips on Setting Boundaries for Your Mental Health." <https://www.dbsalliance.org/support/young-adults/8-tips-on-setting-boundaries-for-your-mental-health/> Accessed 19 January 2023

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