

Trichotillomania (TTM/Trich):

Tips for self-management of the urge to pull

These are a collection of ideas from people who have TTM/Trich on how to substitute the sensory stimulation and emotional soothing that the pulling provides for you. Feel free to share your tips with OCD Ireland of what works for you.

Create a barrier. ... to reduce the tactile sensation

- Transparent micro-pore tape (available in pharmacies) place a little bit on both thumbnails & it reduces the ability to grip short hair & it is quite discrete.
- Put a barrier cream like Vaseline on brows or target hotspots to reduce grip.
- Band aids and gloves are useful barrier tools.
- Keep barrier tools available where needed – the hotspots round your house, office, car, anywhere you are likely to pull.
- Wear gloves if you pull when driving... thin leather (like golfing gloves) are best – and put them on before you get into the car – each time! Remember to acknowledge your success when you arrive without pulling each time.
- Other useful barriers include hats, scarves, wigs/hairpieces/volumizer, etc.

Alternative sensory input

- Invest in some massage tools such as a:
 - Head massager (“the tingler” works for some, available online)
 - Hand/foot massager
 - Back scratcher
- Give yourself a treat with a head massage & hand massage at least once a day.

Toys for your hands

- Latex stretchy toys, or plastic or wooden spikey toys (available in Euro shops, craft-shops and on-line - search for office stress toys)
- Keep these toys in all your hot spots – zones where you pull most such as where you read, watch TV, talk on the phone, etc

Things for your mouth

- Coffee stirrers – plastic/wooded coffee stirrers have saved many a hair by offering something interesting to do with your mouth. Be careful of your teeth though!

- Try ice chips in the mouth but be careful of your teeth. This is also good for pressing onto an inflamed or itchy spot that is drawing your hand to pull.

Reduce scalp, eyelid irritation and inflammation:

If inflammation, itching or localised skin irritation is drawing your hand to pull, see your doctor, or a dermatologist or perhaps your local chemist and ask about topical steroid soothing lotions, shampoos, etc.

Adopt a slogan that speaks to you:

- Be gentle
- Let it grow
- Progress, not perfection
- One day at a time
- I am not alone
- Let go and let God
- Together we can make it
- Keep it simple
- Just for today
- It begins with me
- Recovery isn't a straight line

If you have more ideas to add to these suggestions, please email them to OCD Ireland at info@ocdireland.org.

Good luck!