

-다 못해

past the point of; so much that it became

Something reached its limit and tipped over into something else. Two readings share the form: reaching the end of endurance, and an intensity that overshoots.

HOW TO ATTACH IT

Verb — endurance	-다 못해	보다 → 보다 못해
Adjective — overshoot	-다 못해	하얗다 → 하얗다 못해
Fused word	참다못해 — joined	참다못해 소리쳤다
ㄹ stems keep the ㄹ	-다 못해	만들다 못해
Never takes tense	plain stem only	참았다 못해 is wrong
Second clause	what it tipped into	푸르스름했다

WHEN TO USE IT

Attach -다 못해 to a stem — no vowel rule, ㄹ stays, no tense in front.

With a verb it means endurance ran out: 보다 못해 나섰다 — unable to watch any longer, he stepped in. The commonest are 참다, 보다, 듣다, 기다리다.

With an adjective it means the quality overshoot into another: 하얗다 못해 푸르스름했다 — so white it was almost blue. This reading is a favourite in descriptive writing.

Note the spelling of 참다못해, which has fused into a single word and is written joined. The others take a space.

IN USE

- 1 참다못해 결국 한마디 하고 말았다.
Unable to bear it any longer, I ended up saying something.
- 2 보다 못해 제가 나섰습니다.
I couldn't stand watching, so I stepped in.
- 3 눈이 하얗다 못해 푸르스름해 보였다.
The snow was so white it looked faintly blue.
- 4 기다리다 못해 먼저 자리를 떴어요.
Tired of waiting, I left ahead of the others.
- 5 국이 짜다 못해 쓸 지경이었다.
The soup was salty to the point of bitterness.
- 6 듣다 못해 한마디 거들었다.
Unable to listen any longer, I put in a word.

COMPARED WITH

-(으)ㄹ 지경이다

지경이다 describes the extreme state itself; -다 못해 describes crossing out of it into something else.

쓰러질 지경이었다. (about to collapse) / 짜다 못해 썼다. (salty past salt, into bitter)

-(으)ㄴ 나머지

나머지 says an extreme state produced an action; -다 못해 says the state itself tipped into another state.

놀란 나머지 말을 못 했다. (so startled that) / 하얗다 못해 푸르렀다. (white past white)

-(으)ㄹ 정도로

정도로 measures against a threshold; -다 못해 says the threshold was passed.

솔 정도로 짭다. (salty enough to be bitter) / 짜다 못해 썼다. (salty beyond salt)

WATCH OUT

X 참았다 못해 한마디 했다.

O 참다못해 한마디 했다.

-다 never carries tense here, and 참다못해 has fused into one word.

X 눈이 하얗다 못해 아름다웠다.

O 눈이 하얗다 못해 푸르스름했다.

The second clause has to name what the quality tipped into — a further point on the same scale, not an unrelated judgement.

X 보다못해 나섰습니다.

O 보다 못해 나섰습니다.

Only 참다못해 is written joined. The rest take a space.