

Anxiety Workbook

Assess, understand, and alleviate anxieties with nine activities and exercises tailored to general and situational worries.

Assess Your Anxiety

Self-Care for Anxiety

Somatic (Body-Based) Exercises

Cognitive Exercises

Anxiety Workbook

Managing anxiety can feel overwhelming, especially when it disrupts your thoughts, emotions, and daily life. But with practical strategies and a bit of practice, you can learn to reduce anxiety's impact and find more calm and balance in your everyday routines. **This workbook offers a variety of worksheets designed to help you understand your anxiety, develop effective coping skills, and build confidence in managing challenging moments.**

Here is a brief introduction to each worksheet included in this package:

What is Anxiety?

This worksheet helps you understand anxiety and how you experience it in your thoughts, feelings, sensations, and behaviors.

Assessment and Worksheet Navigator

Assess your symptoms of generalized vs. situational anxiety, and **learn which of the worksheets below are the best fit for you based on your answers.**

Self-Care Inventory

Assess your current self-care habits and identify areas where you can make improvements. Prioritizing self-care is essential for reducing anxiety and maintaining mental well-being.

Practicing Gratitude

This worksheet encourages you to focus on the positive aspects of your life, which can shift attention away from anxiety and promote a more optimistic outlook. Consistent gratitude practice builds resilience and enhances emotional well-being.

Setting SMART Goals

Use this structured method to set clear, specific, and achievable goals that help reduce anxiety by providing direction and focus. SMART goals break down overwhelming tasks into manageable steps, making them easier to accomplish.

Nervous System Regulation

This worksheet helps you understand how emotions show up in your body and guides you in practicing techniques to calm your nervous system. Regulating your nervous system can reduce anxiety and improve your emotional responses in challenging situations.

self-care
worksheets

somatic
worksheets

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Identifying Your Triggers

Learn to recognize the specific situations, thoughts, or events that trigger your anxiety. Understanding your triggers is the first step toward managing them more effectively.

Cognitive Restructuring

This worksheet guides you in challenging negative thoughts and replacing them with more balanced, realistic ones. By changing how you think, you can reduce anxiety and improve your overall mindset.

Hierarchy of Fears

Create a list of your fears, from least to most anxiety-provoking, to help you gradually face and overcome them. This approach can build your confidence and reduce the intensity of your anxiety over time.



What is Anxiety?

When anxious, we feel feelings of fear ranging from mild worry to panic. Anxiety may arise during stressful situations and resolve when they are over, or may be more long-lasting or pervasive.

Why do we get anxious?

Anxiety is our nervous system's way of preparing us for **threat**. When our systems detect a threat, we feel an increase in energy, become focused on the threat, and feel urges to fight, flee, freeze, or appease others to keep ourselves or our loved ones safe.

What does anxiety feel like?

Anxiety shows up in our thoughts, feelings, body sensations, and behaviors or behavior urges. Check whether you have the following experiences when you are anxious:

Thoughts

- Expecting the worst
- "What if" questions
- Only seeing the negative
- Racing or distracted thoughts

Feelings

- Worried, apprehensive, nervous
- Frozen, dread
- Irritable, tense, on-edge
- Fearful, alarmed, scared, panicked

Sensations

- Fast heart rate or breathing
- Tension, restlessness
- Shaking, sweating, too hot or cold
- Nauseous, dizzy, clammy

Behaviors

- Avoid, leave, ignore, or hide
- Freeze or get stuck
- Try to please others, fix things, or prepare for the worst

How common is anxiety?

Most people experience brief anxiety from time to time, especially when stressful situations arise. Some people are at higher risk of experiencing anxiety (e.g., women, teenagers, those with a family history of mental illness). Anxiety disorders are common – **31.1%** of adults in America struggle with an anxiety disorder at some point in their life.

What can I do to work on my anxiety?

Anxiety can be managed in a variety of ways, including self-care and a healthy lifestyle, coping and mindfulness skills, problem-solving, social support, and somatic (body-based) exercises. When anxiety becomes a **disorder** (that is, it occurs daily, becomes very distressing, or gets in the way of functioning at school, work, or home), research shows that treatment like psychotherapy, medication, and support groups can be highly effective.

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Assessment and Worksheet Navigator

Anxiety is different for everyone. This worksheet is designed to help you understand your anxiety, and direct you to worksheets in this workbook that may be the most helpful to you.

First, consider whether your anxiety arises in certain situations, or is more general:

General Anxiety

I've always been somewhat anxious.
- OR - I worry about a variety of things.

Check out the questions below

Situational Anxiety

Usually I'm okay, but when certain situations or stresses come up, I get anxious.

Try the next page

Over the last two weeks, how often have you been bothered by the following problems?

	Not at all	Some days	More than half the days	Nearly every day
Feeling nervous, anxious, or on edge	0	1	2	3
Not being able to stop or control worrying	0	1	2	3
Worrying too much about different things	0	1	2	3
Trouble relaxing	0	1	2	3
Being so restless that it is hard to sit still	0	1	2	3
Becoming easily annoyed or irritable	0	1	2	3
Feeling afraid, as if something awful might happen	0	1	2	3

If you circled any problems, how difficult have they made it for you to do your work, take care of things at home, or get along with other people?

- Not difficult at all
 Somewhat difficult
 Very difficult
 Extremely difficult

A modification of the GAD-7. Spitzer, R. L., Kroenke, K., Williams, J. B., & Löwe, B. (2006). <https://doi.org/10.1001/archinte.166.10.1092>.

Take a look at your answers above.

- If you answered with mostly 0s and 1s, or you checked “not difficult at all” or “somewhat difficult”, you might benefit most from our [Self-Care](#) and worksheets below.
- If you answered with mostly 2s and 3s, or you checked “very difficult” or “extremely difficult,” you might benefit from [all](#) worksheets below. You might also benefit from [therapy for anxiety](#).
- Does the intensity of your anxiety seem *out of proportion to* (too big for) the stressors you face? You might benefit most from our [Cognitive](#) worksheets below, and [therapy for anxiety](#).

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Assessment and Worksheet Navigator

Note how often specific situations cause you anxiety *when they arise*. My anxiety comes up during times when...

	Not at all	Some times	More than half the times	Nearly every time
I am being evaluated • giving a presentation at work, doing a job interview, meeting new people, going on dates	0	1	2	3
I might be judged or embarrassed • about how I look, how I sound, how I act, how I think	0	1	2	3
There is confrontation • someone confronting me, I need to confront someone else, or there is confrontation around me	0	1	2	3
I am reminded of something harmful from my past • settings, sights, sounds, smells that remind me of a past hurt	0	1	2	3
I get overstimulated • when things are too loud, bright, hot, crowded, or confusing	0	1	2	3
Life stressors come up • financial problems; work challenges; caring for children or loved ones; illness or injury; conflict with family or friends	0	1	2	3
My or my loved ones' safety or wellbeing could be threatened • dangerous or discriminatory situations	0	1	2	3

If you circled any situations, how difficult have they made it for you to do your work, take care of things at home, or get along with other people?

Not difficult at all

Somewhat difficult

Very difficult

Extremely difficult

Take a look at your answers above.

- If you answered with 0s and 1s, or you checked “not difficult at all” or “somewhat difficult”, you might benefit most from our [Self-Care](#) worksheets below.
- If one or more situations have 2s or 3s, or you checked “very difficult” or “extremely difficult,” you might benefit from [all](#) worksheets below. You might also benefit from [therapy for anxiety](#).
- Does the intensity of your anxiety seem *out of proportion to* (too big for) the stressors you face? You might benefit most from our [Cognitive](#) worksheets below, and [therapy for anxiety](#).

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Self-care is any technique that enhances your well-being and replenishes your mind and body. For example, practicing daily gratitude, laughing with a loved one, and taking daily walks can boost your mood and improve overall well-being. A self-care routine is not one-size-fits-all but requires experimenting with different strategies to understand what works best for you.

This worksheet is designed to help you explore a variety of specific self-care activities that can improve your well-being. You will be asked to rank each activity on a scale from 1-3 to determine how well you are currently engaging in these practices. After ranking, you can “star” the activities you would like to do more often. The goal of this worksheet is to help you recognize the different types of self-care available to you, identify what you are doing well, and pinpoint areas where you can improve to feel better overall.

Ranking

- 1 I rarely engage in this, and it is not a regular part of my routine.
- 2 I occasionally engage in this, but it is not consistent.
- 3 I regularly engage in this, and it is a frequent part of my routine.
- ★ I want to do this more frequently.

1 2 3 ★ Physical Self-Care: Improving your physical health.

- | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Engaging in regular physical activity such as walking, running, yoga, or strength training. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Ensuring you get enough restful sleep each night to rejuvenate your body. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Eating a balanced and nutritious diet, including plenty of fruits, vegetables, and grains. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Drinking enough water throughout the day to stay hydrated. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Maintaining good hygiene practices such as bathing, brushing teeth, and grooming. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Attending regular check-ups and following medical advice from healthcare professionals. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Taking time to relax and unwind, through activities like taking a bath and getting a massage. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Limiting or avoiding the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other substances. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Spending time outdoors in natural sunlight to enhance vitamin D levels and improve mood. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Paying attention to your body's needs, such as stretching when tense or resting when tired. |

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1 2 3 ★ **Emotional Self-Care: Processing & expressing your emotions.**

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Participating in activities you enjoy to boost your mood and provide a sense of fulfillment.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Spending time with friends and family to build support and reduce feelings of isolation.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Practicing mindfulness to stay present and manage negative thoughts.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Writing down thoughts and feelings to process emotions and gain insights.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Keeping a gratitude journal or reflecting on things you are thankful for.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Using positive affirmations to counter negative self-talk and build self-esteem.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Using music to relax, uplift your mood, or express your emotions.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Expressing your emotions through art, music, writing, or other creative outlets.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Set achievable goals and celebrate your progress, no matter how small.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Regular sessions with a therapist or counselor to explore and address emotional challenges.

1 2 3 ★ **Social Self-Care: Fostering & maintaining healthy relationships.**

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Spending time with people you like and make you feel good about yourself.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Asking for help from friends or family when you're feeling down or overwhelmed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Learning to say no and establishing boundaries to protect your emotional well-being.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Participating in support groups to gain insight and emotional support from others.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Participating in clubs or organizations that align with your interests to meet new people.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Giving your time to help others in your community to foster connection and purpose.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Going to social gatherings, parties, or community events to build your social network.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Scheduling regular get-togethers, such as a weekly coffee date, or a monthly dinner.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Actively listening when talking with others, which helps strengthen your relationships.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Scheduling intentional alone time with your romantic partner.

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1 2 3



Professional Self-Care: Maintaining a healthy work-life balance and pursuing career development opportunities.

Clearly defining work hours and sticking to them to ensure a healthy work-life balance.

Stepping away from work to recharge, through daily short breaks and using vacation time.

Talking to a supervisor or HR about mental health challenges (if it feels safe).

Exploring available support options, such as employee assistance programs (EAP).

Organizing and prioritizing work tasks to manage workload effectively and reduce stress.

Ensuring your work environment is comfortable and conducive to productivity.

Establishing achievable work goals and celebrating small accomplishments.

Being kind to yourself during work and avoiding excessive self-criticism.

Building positive relationships with coworkers for mutual support and camaraderie.

1 2 3



Spiritual Self-Care: Nurturing your spirit and providing purpose.

Practicing meditation to connect with your inner self and find peace and clarity.

Engaging in prayer or other forms of communication with a higher power.

Spending time in nature to experience connection to the world around you.

Regularly reflecting on what you are thankful for to cultivate an appreciative mindset.

Reading inspirational books, scriptures, or quotes to uplift and inspire your spirit.

Participating in spiritual or religious community activities.

Engaging in artistic activities, such as painting, music, or writing.

Performing acts of kindness and service to others, fostering a sense of purpose.

Acting in accordance with your morals to create a sense of integrity in your life.

Spending time with the people who give your life meaning.

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Gratitude is more than just a positive feeling; it's a practical tool that can help manage anxiety and improve your mental well-being. When you practice gratitude regularly, it can shift your focus away from anxious thoughts and help you notice the good things in your life, building resilience against stress. This worksheet is designed to help you recognize and appreciate the positive aspects of your daily experiences.

PART 1: Daily Gratitude List

Write down three things you are grateful for each day.

WEEK 1	Gratitude 1	Gratitude 2	Gratitude 3
M	<i>Ex: The taste of fresh coffee this morning.</i>	<i>The kind text my friend sent me.</i>	<i>The relaxing bath I took to unwind.</i>
T	<i>A productive meeting where I felt heard.</i>	<i>My blanket keeping me warm while I read.</i>	<i>A surprise call from Mom to check on me.</i>
W			
T			
F			
S			
S			

How did practicing gratitude affect your mood and outlook over the week?

Ex: Kind messages and calls reminded me that I have a support system and people who genuinely care about me. Sometimes I get caught up in my own struggles, so being reminded of these connections really lifted my mood and made me feel valued.

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PART 1: Daily Gratitude List

Write down three things you are grateful for each day.

WEEK 2	Gratitude 1	Gratitude 2	Gratitude 3
M			
T			
W			
T			
F			
S			
S			

How did practicing gratitude affect your mood and outlook over the week?

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PART 1: Daily Gratitude List

Write down three things you are grateful for each day.

WEEK 3	Gratitude 1	Gratitude 2	Gratitude 3
M			
T			
W			
T			
F			
S			
S			

How did practicing gratitude affect your mood and outlook over the week?

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.....

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.....

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PART 1: Daily Gratitude List

Write down three things you are grateful for each day.

WEEK 4	Gratitude 1	Gratitude 2	Gratitude 3
M			
T			
W			
T			
F			
S			
S			

How did practicing gratitude affect your mood and outlook over the week?

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PART 3: Monthly Summary

At the end of each month, summarize your gratitude practice.

What patterns do you notice in the things you are grateful for?

How has your perspective changed since you started practicing gratitude?

What challenges did you face in practicing gratitude, and how did you overcome them?

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SMART Goals is a structured goal-setting method that helps individuals create clear, actionable objectives. For individuals dealing with anxiety, this approach is particularly beneficial because it provides structure and clarity, which can reduce feelings of overwhelm and improve confidence. **By breaking down larger tasks into specific, manageable steps, SMART goals make it easier to take action without becoming paralyzed by anxiety.**

S

Specific

What is your goal? Write down exactly what you want to achieve. Be clear and detailed about what you expect to accomplish.

Example: I want to finish writing a 20-page research paper on climate change for my environmental science class.

M

Measurable

How will you measure your progress? Determine how you will track your progress and know when you have achieved your goal.

Example: I will measure my progress by completing 5 pages each week, ensuring that I reach the 20-page target by the deadline.

A

Achievable

Is your goal realistic? What steps can you take to make your goal achievable? Break down your goal into smaller, manageable tasks.

Example: I will allocate two hours each day to work on my paper, ensuring that I have enough time to research, write, and revise.

R

Relevant

Does this goal align with your broader objectives? Ensure that your goal is relevant and meaningful to your overall life or career goals. Reflect on the value and impact of achieving this goal.

Example: Completing this research paper will help me improve my writing skills and deepen my understanding of climate change, which is essential for my career in environmental science.

T

Time-Bound

What is your deadline for achieving this goal? Set a specific date by which you plan to achieve your goal. Identify immediate actions you can take to begin your progress.

Example: My deadline for the research paper is December 15th. I will start by creating an outline and gathering initial research materials today.

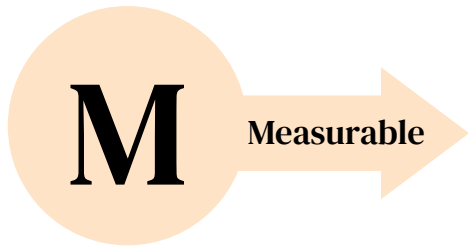
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What is your goal?

Blank area for writing the goal.



How will you measure your progress?

Blank area for writing how to measure progress.



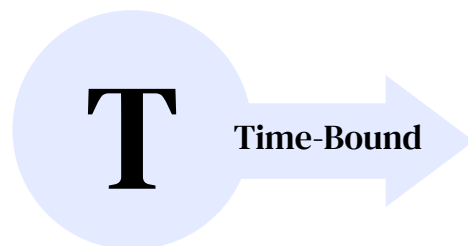
Is your goal realistic?

Blank area for writing if the goal is realistic.



Does this goal align with your broader objective?

Blank area for writing if the goal aligns with broader objectives.



What is your deadline for achieving this goal?

Blank area for writing the deadline for achieving the goal.

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Be Flexible

If you're struggling to reach a goal, don't be afraid to adjust it. It's okay to change the timeline, make the goal smaller, or alter the steps as needed.

Celebrate Milestones

Reward yourself for every step or milestone you reach, no matter how small. This could be as simple as taking a break, enjoying a favorite treat, or planning a fun activity.

Give Yourself Enough Time

Make sure you have enough time to achieve your goals without feeling overwhelmed. It's better to allow extra time and feel accomplished than to set an unrealistic deadline and feel discouraged.

Stay Patient & Be Kind to Yourself

Progress may be slow, and setbacks can happen. Remind yourself that change takes time, and be kind to yourself if things don't go perfectly.

What obstacles have I encountered, and how have I handled them?

What progress have I made so far? What am I proud of?

What support or resources might help me continue making progress?

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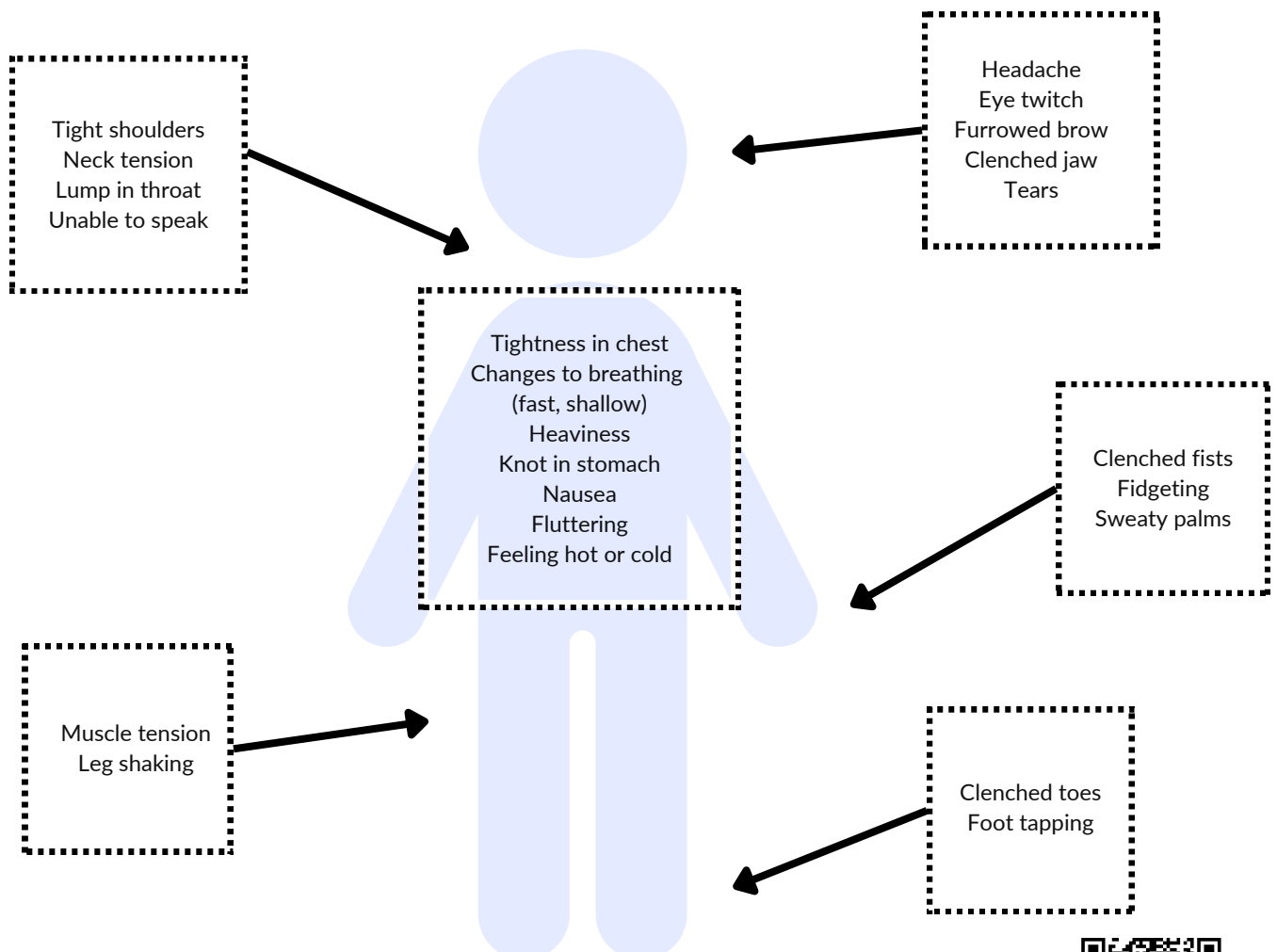
Nervous System Regulation

Nervous system dysregulation occurs when your body becomes overwhelmed by chronic stress, trauma, or emotional strain, causing it to get “stuck” in the extremes of high anxiety or a low-energy, shut-down state. This can look like racing thoughts, difficulty sleeping, feeling jumpy, or even physical symptoms like a racing heart or tense muscles. On the other hand, dysregulation can also manifest as exhaustion, numbness, or a sense of disconnection from yourself or others. These signs show that your nervous system isn't balancing well between states of alertness and rest.

Regulating your nervous system means finding ways to help your body feel calm, safe, and grounded, even in the face of stress. It's about using techniques that help you shift out of states of high alert or shutdown and move toward a place where you feel more stable and centered. By learning to regulate your nervous system, you can improve your ability to cope with life's challenges, experience more emotional balance, and feel more connected to yourself and others.

This worksheet will guide you in recognizing how your emotions show up as physical sensations, like tension, fluttering, or heaviness. Understanding these sensations is the first step in managing stress and emotions more effectively. You'll learn to tune into your body's signals and practice techniques to help calm or soothe these responses, giving you tools to handle stress and emotional challenges in a healthier way.

Here's an example of how emotions might be experienced in the body:

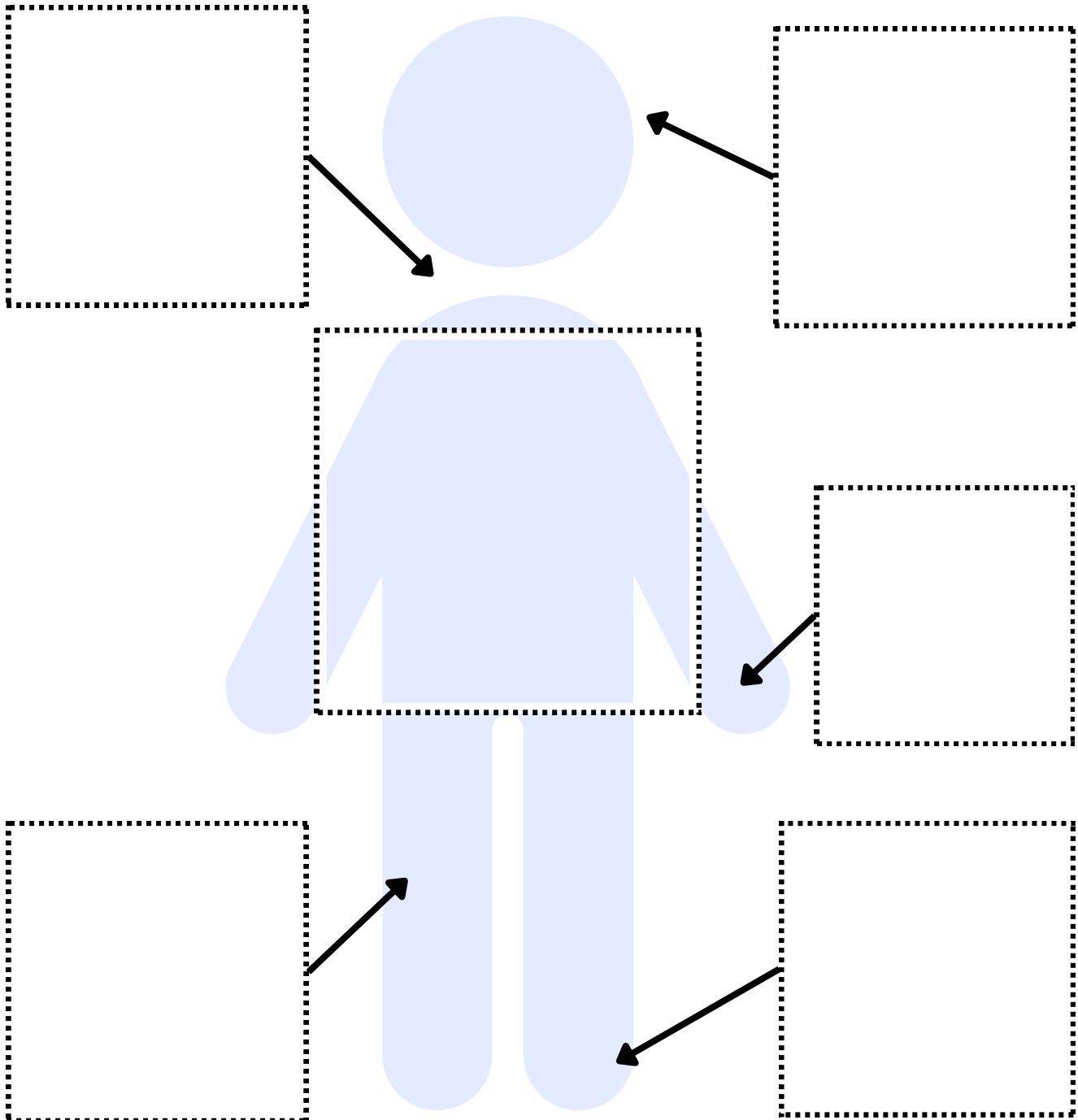


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PART 1: Scan Your Body for Sensations

Starting with your feet and working your way up, notice any physical sensations. These can be positive, neutral, or uncomfortable. There is no wrong answer. Just notice what you notice and write it down. Here's an example of how emotions might be experienced in the body.



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One way to regulate your nervous system is by addressing the physical sensations that come up when you are feeling strong emotions. This could include changing your temperature, relaxing a muscle, or doing something that feels soothing.

PART 2: Regulating the Nervous System

Now, what to do about it? When you're feeling a difficult emotion, first notice what it feels like in your body then try one of these techniques. Notice how you feel afterward.

If you notice this:	Try this:
Clenched jaw	Wiggle your jaw back and forth
Furrowed brow	Massage your forehead
Tight shoulders	Scrunch your shoulders up by your ears, then release
Feeling hot	Put an ice pack on the back of your neck
Tightness in chest	Take slow breaths with a long exhale
Clenched fists	Open and close your hands, shake them out
Knot in stomach	Try a heating pad or weighted blanket
Restlessness, tapping, fidgeting	Move your body, go for a walk
Tightness in chest	Sing or hum

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Daily self-care for the nervous system is important for being able to cope with physical and emotional responses to difficult situations. This means engaging in activities that help you feel centered, grounded, present and calm on a daily basis. Stress, illness and even the pressures of everyday life can dysregulate the nervous system, and these activities can help you move through your emotions in a healthy way.

PART 3: Daily Nervous System Self-Care

Nurture your nervous system! Use this worksheet to help you rate how often you do these practices, then add this list to your daily self-care routine.

Ranking

- 1 I rarely engage in this, and it is not a regular part of my routine.
- 2 I occasionally engage in this, but it is not consistent.
- 3 I regularly engage in this, and it is a frequent part of my routine.
- ★ I want to do this more frequently.

1 2 3



Nervous System Self-Care

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Practice breathing including taking slow breaths with a long exhale
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Move your body, stretch or go for a walk
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do 5 minutes of mindfulness meditation, simply noticing your senses
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tense and relax each muscle group in your body starting with the toes and working up
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Take a break from screens and any over-stimulating media
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Listen to soothing music or sounds
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Take a warm bath or shower
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do aromatherapy with essential oils or a favorite candle
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Spend time outdoors in nature
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Drink a cup of comforting tea or another soothing ritual before bed

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Journaling can be a powerful tool for building new habits that support nervous system regulation. It allows you to explore which techniques or coping tools are most effective, so you can refine your routine.

PART 4: Daily Reflection

Reflect on how you feel each day as you practice these techniques. Track the techniques you are using, how effective they were, and any patterns of changes you have noticed. Create extra copies of this page for each day of the week.

Which techniques did you use today?

Which technique was the most effective?

Which techniques were not effective and need to be adjusted?

Rate your nervous system
regulation today (1-10)

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Identifying Your Anxiety Triggers

Anxiety triggers are specific people, places, situations, or stimuli that can provoke feelings of anxiety, sometimes reminding you of past stressful or overwhelming experiences. Some triggers may be obvious, while others are subtle and harder to pinpoint. Becoming familiar with your triggers can help you build effective coping strategies to manage anxiety in healthy ways.

You might already recognize some of your triggers. List them below:

Sounds

Sights

Smells

Emotions

Locations

Situations

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Identifying Your Anxiety Triggers

Tracking a specific trigger allows you to become more aware of the patterns surrounding it, giving you insight into what sets off the reaction, why it feels overwhelming, and how it affects you. With this information, you can start to practice coping strategies that directly address the specific elements of the trigger. To get started, think of a recent experience where you felt triggered, and map out the details of that situation to gain more clarity on its impact and meaning.

1

What was the situation?

Describe the setting, including where you were, who was there, and what was happening.

2

What emotions came up when you felt triggered?

Identify specific feelings, such as fear, anger, sadness, or shame.

3

What thoughts ran through your mind when the trigger occurred?

Note any specific thoughts, beliefs, or memories that surfaced in that moment.

4

How did your body respond physically?

Describe any physical reactions, such as a racing heart, muscle tension, sweating, or feeling cold or hot.

5

Were there people, sounds, smells, or sights involved that seemed to make the reaction stronger?

Look for specific sensory details that may have amplified the trigger.

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Identifying Your Anxiety Triggers

Look for patterns in the situations or thoughts that trigger your anxiety. Recognizing these patterns will help you anticipate when anxiety might arise and prepare yourself to manage it more effectively.

Are there common themes, people or situations that often trigger anxiety?

Are there any early warning signs or cues that help you recognize when you're being triggered?

What thoughts go through your mind when you feel triggered?

How do your anxiety triggers affect your behavior or decision-making?

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Identifying Your Anxiety Triggers

To work through a trigger, it's essential to remind our body that we're not in danger, helping it to return to a state of calm. By grounding ourselves in the present and assuring our body of safety, we can start to rewire our response to triggers, gradually reducing their intensity and reclaiming control over how we feel and react.

How can you remind yourself that you are safe when you're experiencing a trigger?

Examples of Coping Strategies

To learn more about coping skills you can use, scan the QR code below.

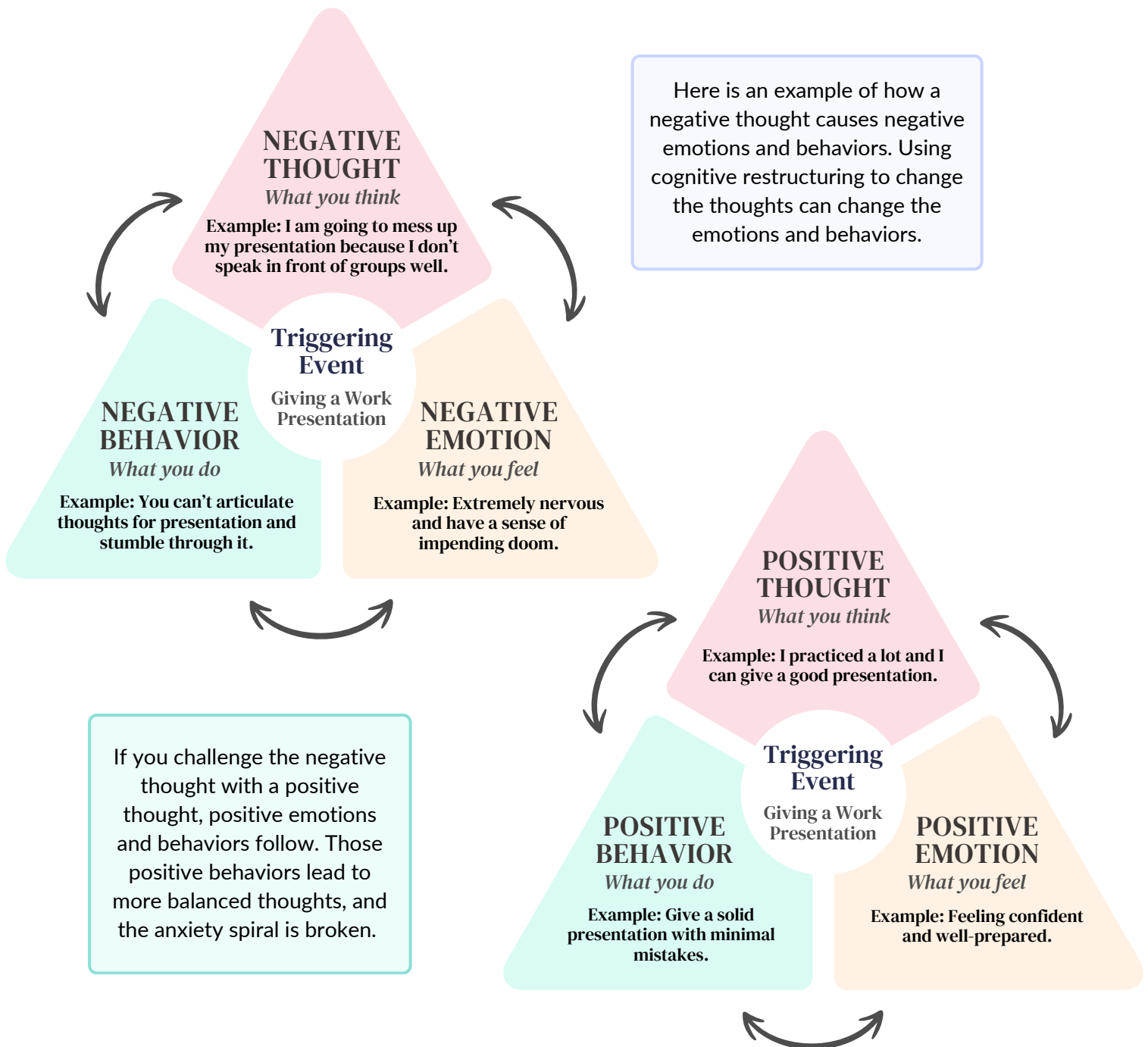
- Take some deep breaths. Try to inhale through your nose for a count of 4, hold your breath for a count of 7, and then exhale slowly through your mouth for a count of 8. Repeat 5 times.
- Ground yourself with the 5-4-3-2-1 method. Identify 5 things you can see, 4 things you can touch, 3 things you can hear, 2 things you can smell, and 1 thing you can taste.
- Ask yourself if your fears are based on facts or assumptions. Look for evidence that supports or contradicts these thoughts, and consider more balanced, realistic perspectives.
- Treat yourself with the same kindness and understanding you would offer a friend.
- Keep a journal to document your anxious thoughts. Writing them down can help you analyze and understand their patterns and triggers, making it easier to manage them over time.
- Gradually tense and then relax different muscle groups in your body, from head to toe, to release physical tension and promote relaxation.
- Use positive affirmations to counter anxious thoughts and affirm your ability to handle challenges.
- Create a list of your strengths, skills, and past achievements. Review this list whenever anxiety arises to remind yourself of your abilities and successes.

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Cognitive Restructuring

Cognitive restructuring is a CBT technique that involves recognizing negative and unhelpful thoughts, examining the evidence for and against these thoughts, and developing more helpful alternative thoughts. **For someone experiencing anxiety, cognitive restructuring can help challenge and change the anxious and often irrational thoughts that contribute to their feelings of fear and worry.**



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Cognitive Restructuring

THOUGHT

What you think in a situation
Ex: I'm going to fail at this task.

EMOTION

How you feel
Ex: I feel anxious and scared.

BEHAVIOR

How you act in the situation
Ex: Procrastinate or over-prepare to the point of exhaustion.

It's important to understand that our automatic thoughts affect our feelings and influence our behavior.

You can recognize unhealthy thought patterns that are causing you increased anxiety by practicing cognitive restructuring. Use the questions below each time you're experiencing unwanted thoughts that lead to unhealthy behaviors.

Thoughts

**Is my thought
factual?**

**What evidence
do I have to
support my
thought?**

**What would
someone else
say about the
situation?**

**Is it possible to
view this
situation
differently?**

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This worksheet is designed to help you systematically confront and overcome your anxiety by gradually exposing yourself to the feared object or situation. Start by identifying your specific anxiety triggers, then break them down into smaller, manageable steps, and rank these steps from least to most anxiety-provoking. Then, systematically work through each step, starting with the least threatening and gradually progressing to more challenging ones.

STEP 1: What is your primary fear?

Example: Fear of flying

STEP 2: List smaller challenges that are related to your primary fear

Watching videos of airplanes taking off and landing

Reading articles about flying

Visiting an airport without boarding a plane

Searching for flight tickets online

Watching flights take off and land near the airport

Listening to audio of a flight in turbulence

Sitting in an airplane during a short flight

STEP 3: Rate these challenges with the Anxiety Scale

Challenges That Trigger Your Fear	Anxiety Level
Watching videos of airplanes taking off and landing	2
Reading articles about flying	3
Visiting an airport without boarding a plane	5
Searching for flight tickets online	6
Watching flights take off and land near the airport	7
Listening to audio of a flight in turbulence	8
Sitting in an airplane during a short flight	10

Anxiety Scale

10 panic

9 

8 fearful

7 

6 afraid

5 

4 worried

3 

2 okay

1 

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STEP 4: Prepare for challenges

What makes this technique effective is **staying in the situation until your anxiety naturally comes down on its own**. This process is what helps your nervous system to learn that the feared situation is tolerable (and teaches your mind that situations are not as scary as you may think!).

As you can imagine, facing your fears and waiting for your anxiety to come down is difficult! So here are two ways to prepare for the challenge.

List effective coping skills in case they're needed

If a situation is far more challenging than you thought, you may need to use coping skills like taking a break, deep breathing, listening to music, or taking a walk. List coping skills that you know work for you on the right.

deep breaths, listen to my favorite song,
text a friend

Plan some appropriate rewards

Facing fears takes practice and motivation! Use the space to the right to consider small rewards you are willing to reward yourself with, like stickers, treats, money towards a purchase, etc.

stickers, chocolates, money towards a
new purchase

STEP 5: Plan your challenges and rewards, starting with the least scary






Challenges That Trigger Your Fear	Anxiety Level	Reward Per Try
<i>Watching videos of airplanes taking off and landing</i>	2	<i>sticker</i>
<i>Reading articles about flying</i>	3	<i>sticker</i>
<i>Visiting an airport without boarding a plane</i>	5	<i>chocolates</i>
<i>Searching for flight tickets online</i>	6	<i>chocolates</i>
<i>Watching flights take off and land near the airport</i>	7	<i>\$ to purchase</i>
<i>Listening to audio of a flight in turbulence</i>	8	<i>\$ to purchase</i>
<i>Sitting in an airplane during a short flight</i>	10	<i>\$ to purchase</i>

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STEP 3: Do challenges and record your progress

At the beginning of each challenge, use the Anxiety Scale to rate your anxiety. Your goal is to **stay in the scary situation until your anxiety naturally comes down on its own**. Every so often through the challenge, re-rate your anxiety. You can stop the challenge when your anxiety has come down significantly (at least halfway). Unless a challenge is much too difficult or you get really stuck, try not to use coping skills. When the same challenge causes less *starting* anxiety, you'll know you're ready to move on to the next challenge.

Date	Challenges That Trigger Your Fear	Anxiety At:		Anxiety Scale
		Start	End	
May 3	Watching videos of airplanes taking off and landing	2	1	10 panic
May 4	Watching videos of airplanes taking off and landing	1	1	9 
May 5	Reading articles about flying	1	1	8 fearful
May 6	Visiting an airport without boarding a plane	5	2	7 
May 7	Visiting an airport without boarding a plane	4	1	6 afraid
May 8	Visiting an airport without boarding a plane	2	1	5 
May 9	Searching for flight tickets online	7	6	4 worried
May 10	Searching for flight tickets online	5	2	3 
May 11	Searching for flight tickets online	3	1	2 okay
May 12	Searching for flight tickets online	2	1	1 
May 13	Watching flights take off and land near the airport	6	2	

As you work through the challenges, use these spaces to reflect and adjust if needed.

How does it feel to “wait out” anxiety?	Do any of the challenges need to be adjusted?	Are rewards and coping skills (if necessary) working?
<p><i>It was really hard at first and didn't feel natural. After a couple of challenges, I think I got the hang of it though.</i></p>	<p><i>May 9: I tried searching for flight tickets online before work and got way too overwhelmed.</i></p> <p><i>May 10: searching for flight tickets online after work went better.</i></p>	<p><i>May 9: needed to use coping skills before work. Deep breathing worked okay, but listening to music worked better.</i></p>

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STEP 1: What is your primary fear?

STEP 2: List smaller challenges that are related to your primary fear

STEP 3: Rate these challenges with the Anxiety Scale

Challenges That Trigger Your Fear	Anxiety Level
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<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>

Anxiety Scale

- 10 panic
- 9 
- 8 fearful
- 7 
- 6 afraid
- 5 
- 4 worried
- 3 
- 2 okay
- 1 

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STEP 4: Prepare for challenges

What makes this technique effective is **staying in the situation until your anxiety naturally comes down on its own**. This process is what helps your nervous system to learn that the feared situation is tolerable (and teaches your mind that situations are not as scary as you may think!).

As you can imagine, facing your fears and waiting for your anxiety to come down is difficult! So here are two ways to prepare for the challenge.

List effective coping skills in case they're needed

If a situation is far more challenging than you thought, you may need to use coping skills like taking a break, deep breathing, listening to music, or taking a walk. List coping skills that you know work for you on the right.

.....

.....

.....

Plan some appropriate rewards

Facing fears takes practice and motivation! Use the space to the right to consider small rewards you are willing to reward yourself with, like stickers, treats, money towards a purchase, etc.

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STEP 5: Plan your challenges and rewards, starting with the least scary






Challenges That Trigger Your Fear	Anxiety Level	Reward Per Try
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Date	Challenges That Trigger Your Fear	Anxiety At:		Anxiety Scale
		Start	End	
May 3				10 panic
May 4				9 
May 5				8 fearful
May 6				7 
May 7				6 afraid
May 8				5 
May 9				4 worried
May 10				3 
May 11				2 okay
May 12				1 
May 13				

As you work through the challenges, use these spaces to reflect and adjust if needed.

How does it feel to “wait out” anxiety?	Do any of the challenges need to be adjusted?	Are rewards and coping skills (if necessary) working?
.....

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Additional Resources to Support Your Mental Health Journey

It can be hard to know where to begin looking for support in your mental health journey. Getting a referral from a primary care physician is a reliable first step. Also, sometimes family and friends have experienced similar issues and have professionals they would recommend. The experts at ChoosingTherapy.com are here to help as well, with resources we have reviewed and recommend. Our [strict editorial standards](#) ensure our reviews are fair, honest, thorough, and based on firsthand experience.

You Can Trust ChoosingTherapy.com



325+
Companies Reviewed



3,625+
Hours of Firsthand Experience



1,545+
Data Points Analyzed



[Best Online Therapy for Anxiety](#)

Online therapy is a convenient way to connect with a licensed therapist to address mental health issues, reduce unhealthy behaviors, develop effective coping skills, and get more satisfaction out of life. Many companies accept insurance and most have next-day appointments available.

[Best Online Psychiatry](#)

Online psychiatry providers enable patients to consult with licensed psychiatrists and other mental health professionals. They can evaluate, diagnose, and prescribe medication to help manage mental health issues. Many companies accept insurance and most have next-day appointments available.



[Best Mental Health Apps](#)

Apps can be great way to monitor mood, track sleep, journal, and practice healthy coping skills like mindfulness and meditation. There are apps specifically designed to help people reduce the symptoms of depression, anxiety, ADHD, chronic stress, and burnout.

[Therapist Directory](#)

When you're looking for a mental health provider with a very particular skill set, level of experience, or personality type, a therapist directory can be very helpful. Using the filters, you can refine your search until you find a therapist who feels like a perfect fit.

