ANXIETY

Worry time

Give your worries one set place in the day

Worry spreads. It follows you into meetings, meals and bedtime. Worry time gives it one short slot instead, so the rest of your day belongs to you again.

What it is

You postpone your worries to a fixed slot of 15 to 20 minutes each day. When a worry arrives outside the slot, you write it down in a few words and go back to what you were doing.

Why it helps

Studies of worry postponement, starting with Borkovec and colleagues in 1983, found people spent less of their day worrying when they saved worries for a set time.

You also learn something important. Worry responds to your choices more than it feels. Many worries look smaller a few hours later.

How to use this sheet

1. Choose a time and a place for worry time. Avoid the hour before bed.
2. During the day, note each worry on the sheet in a few words. Then return to the task in front of you.
3. At worry time, read your list. Rate how much each worry still bothers you, from 0 to 10.
4. Sort each one. Is it a practical problem you act on, or a “what if” about something outside your control?
5. For practical problems, write one small next step. For “what ifs”, notice them and let them go, or carry them to tomorrow’s slot.
6. Stop when the time ends, even if the list is unfinished.

Tips

- ✓ Expect your mind to protest for the first few days. This is normal.
- ✓ Keep the sheet with you, on paper or on your phone.
- ✓ Worry time is for worries. Use the rest of the day for living.

Want support with this? Joseph offers online therapy across the UK. **act-cognitive-therapy.com/start-therapy** or call or WhatsApp 0750 001 6004.

Important. This worksheet supports therapy. It does not replace it. If you feel unsafe or at risk, contact your GP, call NHS 111 and choose the mental health option, call Samaritans free on 116 123, or call 999 in an emergency.

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My worry log

Write each worry as it arrives. Leave the right-hand columns for worry time.

My worry time: Place:

Time	Worry, in a few words	Still a worry? 0–10	Practical or what if?	One next step

What did I notice when I read the list at worry time?

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