

Managing Anxiety — Workbook

This workbook accompanies the Managing Anxiety course and gives you structured exercises, worksheets, and trackers to put each skill into practice. Complete each section after finishing the corresponding module. Note: this workbook is for general education and self-help purposes only — it is not a substitute for professional mental health care.

Understanding Your Anxiety

Map your personal anxiety profile so you can target the right tools.

Exercise: Five-Day Anxiety Mapping Log

For five consecutive days, note every moment when your anxiety reaches 4/10 or above. Record the situation, your thoughts, your physical sensations, and what you did in response. At the end of day five, look for patterns.

- What were my three most frequent trigger situations this week?

- What physical sensation appears first — before my thoughts escalate? Where in my body do I feel it?

- What avoidance behaviour do I default to most often, and what short-term relief does it give me?

- Looking at my map, what is one trigger I could address first with a small exposure step?

Worksheet: My Anxiety Profile Sheet

Fill in each field based on your five-day log and your self-knowledge. Keep this sheet as the anchor reference for your personal plan.

My top 3 anxiety trigger categories (e.g., social evaluation, uncertainty, health):

My earliest physical warning sign (the first sensation before thoughts escalate):

My most common anxious thought (quote it exactly):

My default avoidance or safety behaviour:

My typical anxiety peak level (0–10) during a bad episode:

How long does a typical anxiety episode last before it naturally decreases?

Situations where my anxiety is reliably LOW (under 3/10):

One situation I have been avoiding for more than 2 weeks:

Checklist: Module 1 Readiness Checklist

- I can describe the anxiety maintenance cycle in my own words (trigger !' thought !' arousal !' avoidance !' relief !' repeat)
- I understand the difference between fear (present threat), anxiety (future/ambiguous threat), and worry (cognitive rehearsal)
- I have completed at least 3 days of the five-day anxiety mapping log
- I have identified my top 3 trigger categories
- I have named my earliest physical warning sign
- I have noted my most common avoidance behaviour
- I know my typical anxiety peak level and duration

Grounding and Somatic Regulation Practice

Build a reliable somatic toolkit through structured daily practice and tracking.

Exercise: Breathing Protocol Comparison Trial

Over 8 days, practise each of the four breathing protocols for 5 minutes at the same time each day (ideally morning). After each session, rate your anxiety level before and after on a 0–10 scale. At the end, identify your two most effective techniques.

- Which protocol produced the biggest drop in anxiety rating for me, and how quickly did the effect appear?

- Were there any protocols that felt uncomfortable or made my anxiety worse? What do I think caused that?

- Which technique feels most practical to use in a public or workplace setting without drawing attention?

- What time of day and what location will I commit to for my daily 10-minute breathing practice going forward?

Worksheet: Somatic Toolkit Card

Fill in this card and save it as a phone screenshot or print it on a small card for your wallet. Having your personal toolkit written down reduces cognitive load when anxiety spikes.

My #1 breathing technique and steps (in my own words, under 40 words):

My #2 breathing technique (for a different situation — e.g., public vs. bedtime):

My preferred grounding technique (e.g., 5-4-3-2-1) — describe in 2 sentences:

My backup grounding technique (in case the first is impractical in the moment):

One physical action I can take anywhere in 30 seconds to activate my parasympathetic system:

My PMR session schedule (days of week and time):

How I feel after a PMR session vs. before (record after 3 sessions):

Checklist: Two-Week Somatic Practice Tracker

- Week 1, Day 1: completed breathing protocol trial — Box Breathing (rated before/after)
- Week 1, Day 2: completed breathing protocol trial — Physiological Sigh
- Week 1, Day 3: completed breathing protocol trial — 4-7-8 Breathing
- Week 1, Day 4: completed breathing protocol trial — Resonant Breathing (5.5-5.5)
- Week 1, Day 5: practised 5-4-3-2-1 grounding in a calm state
- Week 1, Day 6: practised 5-4-3-2-1 grounding in a mildly anxious moment (4–5/10)
- Week 1, Day 7: completed first full 15-minute PMR session
- Week 2, Day 1–7: completed daily 10-min resonant breathing practice each day
- Completed at least one body scan this week
- Identified my two most effective somatic techniques and recorded them on my toolkit card

Cognitive Skills Practice

Apply worry management, thought records, and defusion techniques to real anxious thoughts from your own life.

Exercise: Worry Window Experiment

Set up a daily 25-minute worry window for 14 days. Use a notepad or phone note to capture worries throughout the day. At the window, apply the productive vs. unproductive test to each captured worry. Record your observations.

- How many worries did I capture per day on average, and how many were genuinely productive (actionable within 48 hours)?

- For unproductive worries, did they feel as urgent during the worry window as they did when they first arose? What does that tell me?

- What is one productive worry I turned into a concrete action step this week?

- Did setting the worry window reduce intrusive worries at other times of day? Describe what changed.

Worksheet: 7-Column Thought Record

Complete this record for one anxiety episode per day for 7 days. Choose real situations from your life — not hypothetical ones. Be as specific as possible in columns 1–3.

1. Situation (where, when, who — be specific):

2. Emotion (name it; rate intensity 0–100%):

3. Automatic thought (quote it word-for-word):

4. Evidence FOR the thought (facts only, not feelings):

5. Evidence AGAINST the thought (facts that complicate or contradict it):

6. Balanced thought (acknowledge evidence on both sides — not forced positivity):

7. Re-rated emotion intensity after balanced thought (0–100%):

Distortion type identified (e.g., catastrophising, mind-reading, fortune-telling):

Checklist: Cognitive Skills Mastery Checklist

- I can correctly classify a worry as productive or unproductive using the 48-hour action test
- I have set up a daily worry window at a fixed time (not within 1 hour of sleep)
- I have completed at least 5 full 7-column thought records
- I can name at least 4 cognitive distortions and recognise them in my own thinking
- I have practised the thought-labelling defusion technique ("I notice I am having the thought that...") for at least 5 days
- I have tried the leaves-on-a-stream visualisation at least twice
- I understand why thought suppression backfires and can explain defusion in my own words
- I have identified my most frequent cognitive distortion from my thought records

Your Long-Term Anxiety Plan

Build an integrated, written personal plan and establish the lifestyle foundations that sustain low anxiety.

Exercise: Exposure Ladder Design

Choose one situation you have been avoiding due to anxiety. Build an 8-step exposure ladder. Begin with step 1 this week and record your SUDS (Subjective Units of Distress Scale) ratings before, during (every 5 min), and after each exposure.

- What is the avoided situation I am targeting, and how long have I been avoiding it?

- What is my SUDS rating for the first step of my ladder, and what happened to that rating during my first exposure trial?

- Did I use any safety behaviours during my exposure? If so, how can I reduce them in the next trial?

- What did I learn from completing this exposure that I did NOT expect beforehand?

Worksheet: My Personal Anxiety Management Plan

Write your three-tier plan in your own words. Be specific — vague plans fail in high-anxiety moments. Store this in three physical/digital locations once complete.

TIER 1 — Daily Maintenance (anxiety 0–3/10): list specific daily practices with times:

My sleep target (hours, consistent wake time, temperature):

My exercise commitment (type, frequency, duration):

My caffeine rule:

TIER 2 — Situational Coping (anxiety 4–6/10): list exactly 3–4 steps in order:

TIER 3 — Crisis Response (anxiety 7+/10): list maximum 5 steps:

At what point will I contact a trusted person or mental health line?

My 30-day review date (calendar it now):

One sign that would tell me it is time to seek professional support:

Checklist: Course Completion Checklist

- I have completed my written three-tier personal anxiety management plan
- My plan is stored in at least two accessible locations (phone + physical)
- I have completed at least one full exposure ladder step for my target situation
- I have audited my sleep, exercise, and caffeine habits and set at least one concrete target for each
- I can describe the difference between defusion (ACT) and cognitive restructuring (CBT) and know when to use each
- I have filled in my somatic toolkit card with my top two techniques
- I have completed at least 7 thought records over the course of this module
- I know the specific signs that would indicate I should seek professional mental health support
- I have scheduled a 30-day self-review to assess progress and update my plan

Your Action Plan

1. Complete the five-day anxiety mapping log and fill in your personal anxiety profile sheet before moving past Module 1
2. Set up a daily 10-minute breathing practice at a fixed time using a pacing app (Elite HRV, Breathing App by HeartMath, or a simple timer)
3. Schedule a 25-minute daily worry window at a consistent time, never within 1 hour of bedtime
4. Complete one 7-column thought record per day for 7 consecutive days to build the cognitive restructuring habit
5. Practise one defusion technique (thought-labelling) for 5 consecutive days with your most frequent anxious thought
6. Complete at least one full PMR session per week and one body scan per week during the course
7. Audit sleep, exercise, and caffeine this week: measure current levels, then set one target change for the next 14 days
8. Build one exposure ladder for your primary avoided situation and complete step 1 before finishing the course
9. Write your written three-tier anxiety management plan and store it in at least two accessible locations
10. Set a calendar reminder for a 30-day self-review to assess what has improved and what still needs work

