YOUR FREE PRINTABLE KIT

Anxiety & Overthinking Relief Kit

Gentle prompts, grounding exercises and practical worksheets for a busy mind.

Inside this kit

The 2am Anxiety Reset Card

Overthinker's Brain Dump Journal

Worry Time Planner

Racing Mind Rescue Kit

What-If Thought Tracker

Night-time Mental Reset Checklist

General wellness support, not treatment or a substitute for professional mental health care.

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Start here

Inside your kit

Pick the tool you need today. You do not have to work through everything at once.

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Print only the pages you need, at actual size (100%). Worksheets are designed for handwriting. All activities are optional.

Before you try the exercises

Choose only what feels manageable. Do not force breathing exercises or breath holds. Stop if you feel dizzy, breathless or more distressed. If you have a condition affected by breath control, are pregnant, or are unsure, ask your clinician first. Ordinary comfortable breathing or a non-breathing grounding prompt is an alternative.

If anxiety is affecting daily life, seek support from your GP or a qualified mental health professional. For an immediate emergency, contact local emergency services.

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The 2am Anxiety Reset Card

Waking up anxious in the middle of the night can feel disorienting; your heart is racing, your mind jumps straight to worst-case thinking, and it's hard to remember what actually helps. This card is designed to be simple enough to follow half-asleep. Keep it on your bedside table or save a photo of it on your phone.

Step 1: 4-7-8 Breathing[3]

A comfortable breathing rhythm may help you pause. Do not force deep breaths or breath holds. If counting or holding feels uncomfortable, breathe normally or use the grounding exercise instead.

☐ Breathe in quietly through your nose for **4 counts**.

☐ Hold your breath for **7 counts**.

☐ Exhale slowly through your mouth for **8 counts**, making a soft whoosh sound.

☐ Repeat this cycle **4 times** before moving to the next step.

Step 2: The 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Method[2]

Use your senses to notice what is around you. Skip any sense or prompt that feels uncomfortable.

Notice	Write or say (in your head)
5 things you can see	Look around the dark room; shapes, shadows, the ceiling
4 things you can feel	Your blanket, the pillow, the mattress, your own hands
3 things you can hear	Your breathing, a fan, distant traffic, silence itself
2 things you can smell	Sheets, the air, nothing in particular
1 thing you can taste	Whatever is in your mouth right now; even just "nothing"

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More ways to settle

Step 3: A Phrase to Repeat

Choose one line and repeat it slowly, in time with your breathing, until your body starts to settle.

"This feeling will pass. I am safe right now."

"I don't need to solve this at 2am. Tomorrow-me can handle it."

"My mind is racing but my body is safe in bed."

If you are still awake and unsettled

If you are lying awake and becoming frustrated, move to a dim, quiet place and do something calm until you feel sleepy, then return to bed. Avoid clock-watching. See the Sleep Health Foundation reference on the final page.[6]

A quiet activity I could choose tonight

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Overthinker's Brain Dump Journal

When your brain won't stop replaying the day or planning for tomorrow, writing it down moves those thoughts out of your head and onto paper; this is called cognitive offloading, and it's one of the simplest ways to quiet a racing mind before bed.

5-Minute Guided Brain Dump

Set a timer for 5 minutes and write freely in answer to these prompts. Don’t edit; just get it out.

1. What's still on my mind from today?

2. What am I worried I’ll forget to do?

3. What conversation or moment keeps replaying?

4. What do I need to remember for tomorrow?

5. What would help me feel lighter right now?

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Tomorrow’s worries: parking page

Sort tonight’s worries into two piles. Anything in "just worries" gets left here until morning.

Worry	Action needed, or just a worry?	If action: one next step

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Weekly Brain Dump Tracker

A quick log to notice whether this habit is helping you settle faster at night.

Day	Did I brain dump?	Mood before (1-5)	Mood after (1-5)	Notes
Mon	_____	_____	_____	_____
Tue	_____	_____	_____	_____
Wed	_____	_____	_____	_____
Thu	_____	_____	_____	_____
Fri	_____	_____	_____	_____
Sat	_____	_____	_____	_____
Sun	_____	_____	_____	_____

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Worry Time Planner

Scheduling a specific “worry time” earlier in the day teaches your brain that worries will get their turn; so they're less likely to intrude right when you're trying to fall asleep. This works best done at the same time every day, away from bedtime.[1]

Daily Worry Appointment

Day	Worry time	Duration
Today	_____	_____
Tomorrow	_____	_____

Worry-Sorting Template

During your worry time, sort each worry using this simple test.

My worry	Can I actually control this?	What I’ll do about it (action or release)

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Weekly Worry Log

Track how many worries you're carrying and whether worry time is helping shrink the pile.

Day	Worries logged	Worries resolved	How I felt after (1-5)
Mon	_____	_____	_____
Tue	_____	_____	_____
Wed	_____	_____	_____
Thu	_____	_____	_____
Fri	_____	_____	_____
Sat	_____	_____	_____
Sun	_____	_____	_____

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Racing Mind Rescue Kit

Some nights the problem isn't one big worry; it's the same handful of thoughts looping over and over. These optional grounding prompts offer something else to focus on.[2]

Grounding Cheat Sheet

☐ Press your feet flat into the floor or mattress and notice the pressure for 10 seconds.

☐ Hold something cold (a glass of water, a cool surface) for a few seconds.

☐ Name the room you're in out loud or in your head, in detail.

☐ Slowly count backwards from 20.

The Physiological Sigh[5]

Some people find this breathing pattern settling. It is optional: keep it gentle, and stop if you feel dizzy, breathless or uncomfortable.

☐ Take one normal breath in through your nose.

☐ Without exhaling, take a second short, sharp inhale on top of it.

☐ Exhale slowly and fully through your mouth.

☐ Repeat 2-3 times.

"Stop the Loop" Script Card

Say this to yourself (out loud, if you can) the moment you notice you're looping:

"I've noticed I'm thinking about this again. I've already thought about it enough for tonight. I'm going to picture setting it down, and come back to it tomorrow if I need to."

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Pattern-Interrupt Cards

Cut these into cards, or simply read through them when a thought loop starts. Each one is designed to break your focus away from the spiral for a few seconds; often enough to loosen its grip.

Card	Type
Name 3 blue things in the room.	Visual interrupt
Spell your middle name backwards.	Cognitive interrupt
Wiggle your toes for 10 seconds and notice how it feels.	Body interrupt
Hum the first line of a song you like.	Sound interrupt
Trace the outline of your hand slowly with one finger.	Touch interrupt
Picture the thought as a cloud, and watch it drift away.	Visualisation interrupt

Blank card; write your own:

_____

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What-If Thought Tracker

Anxious minds are brilliant at generating worst-case “what if” scenarios. This tracker helps you slow down, look at the actual evidence, and find a more balanced, realistic thought.

Reframe Prompts

☐ How likely is this outcome, really; on a scale of 1 to 10?

☐ What would I tell a friend who had this exact worry?

☐ Has this specific fear come true before?

☐ What’s a more balanced way to think about this?

Evidence-Check Questions[4]

☐ What evidence do I have for this thought?

☐ What evidence do I have against it?

☐ What’s the most likely outcome (not the worst one)?

What-If Thought Log

My "what if" thought	Likelihood (1-10)	Evidence for / against	A more balanced thought

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Night-time Mental Reset Checklist

This isn't about your sleep environment; it's about mentally putting the day down before you try to rest. Overthinkers often carry the whole day's mental load into bed with them; this checklist helps you set it down on purpose.

Mental Decompression Checklist

☐ I've written down anything I'm worried I'll forget.

☐ I've named one thing that went well today.

☐ I've put my phone somewhere out of reach.

☐ I've done a few slow, deliberate breaths.

☐ I've told myself it's okay to stop thinking about today.

3-Question End-of-Day Download

What's one thing I'm carrying into tonight? _____

What's one thing I can let go of until tomorrow? _____

What's one thing I'm grateful for today? _____

Tomorrow's "One Thing" Planner

Instead of a full to-do list running through your head at bedtime, choose just one priority for tomorrow.

Tomorrow, the one thing that matters most is: _____

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Bonus: 7-Day Overthinking Check-In

If overthinking has been a long-running pattern rather than a one-off bad night, try this 7-day tracker. Each day, do one small task and one short calming exercise, then note how you felt.

Day	One small task	Calming exercise (5 min)	How I felt (1-5)
Day 1			
Day 2			
Day 3			
Day 4			
Day 5			
Day 6			
Day 7			

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Keep for reference

About this kit

A collection of optional tools for noticing worries, making room for thoughts and planning one manageable next step. Use the worksheets in any order.

Health & safety disclaimer

General information only, not diagnosis, therapy or individual medical advice. These tools do not promise to treat anxiety or insomnia. Seek support if distress continues or affects daily life. Stop any exercise that makes you feel worse. Do not delay professional care.

Sources

These references support the general guidance. Worksheets and creative exercises are Harcourt Digital tools.

1. NHS Every Mind Matters: Tackling your worries (writing, worry time and action planning)
https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/mental-wellbeing-tips/self-help-cbt-techniques/tackling-your-worries/

2. Cleveland Clinic: 13 Grounding Techniques (senses, distraction and coping statements)
https://health.clevelandclinic.org/grounding-techniques

3. Cleveland Clinic: How To Do the 4-7-8 Breathing Exercise (comfortable counts, not fixed seconds)
https://health.clevelandclinic.org/4-7-8-breathing

4. NHS Every Mind Matters: Thought record (evidence checks and balanced alternatives)
https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/mental-wellbeing-tips/self-help-cbt-techniques/thought-record/

5. Balban et al. (2023), Cell Reports Medicine: Brief structured respiration practices enhance mood and reduce physiological arousal. Daily five-minute practice for one month; not proof that two or three sighs treat anxiety or sleep problems.
https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/36630953/

6. Sleep Health Foundation: Anxiety and Sleep (night-time worries and seeking help)
https://www.sleephealthfoundation.org.au/sleep-topics/anxiety-and-sleep

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