

## Exercise: Identifying Anxiety by Other Names

Look over this list, and circle any words that might apply to you. Maybe you'll learn some new words for your vocab test!

Afraid

Hesitant

Terrified

Agitated

Irritable

Thoughts racing

Alarmed

Isolating

Troubled

Apprehensive

Jittery

Tweaking out

Avoidant

Losing it

Uneasy

Concerned

Nervous

Unfocused

Dread

Overwhelmed

Worried

Edgy

Panicked

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Fearful

Petrified

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Freaking out

Restless

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Fretful

Scared

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Frightened

Stressed

Frozen

Tense

## Symptoms: How They Feel to You, How They Look to Others

Symptom	How it feels from the inside	How it might look from the outside
Feeling restless or edgy	Thoughts racing Too many thoughts	Extra energized Talking fast
Difficulty focusing	Can't concentrate on school, or even fun things like friends, sports, shows, video games, etc. Mind going blank	Grades suffering Work not getting done Work quality not as good Seem forgetful and spacey
Worried or afraid	Feel like something is wrong, or like something bad is about to happen	Talking about fears Avoiding lots of things Acting out to avoid things that trigger anxiety
Irritable	Feeling grumpy, annoyed at everyone and everything	Less patient, more easily frustrated, lashing out, short fuse
Easily fatigued	Tired even after sleeping well Everything taking more energy than it used to	Less energy or ability to do school, social life, sports, and other activities Avoiding activities Easily tired out, giving up easily

Bodily agitation	<p>Heart pounding</p> <p>Sweaty hands</p> <p>Jittery</p> <p>Butterflies in stomach, upset stomach</p> <p>Headaches</p>	<p>Aches, pains, and trips to doctor</p> <p>Going to the bathroom a lot</p>
Sleep difficulties	<p>Can't fall asleep</p> <p>Can't stay asleep</p> <p>Can't wake up (more than usual)</p> <p>Waking up too early</p> <p>Worrying yourself awake</p>	<p>Appears tired from sleep difficulties</p>
Appetite disruptions	<p>Eating too much</p> <p>Having trouble eating due to anxiety</p> <p>Never feeling hungry anymore</p>	<p>Eating too much or too little</p> <p>Eating more unhealthy snacks</p> <p>Weight gain or loss</p>

## Exercise: Common Anxiety Triggers

On a scale from 0 to 10 (with 10 being most anxious), rate how anxious each of these common triggers makes you feel, and then consider how important this issue is for you to work on. You can definitely reduce your anxiety about any of these triggers, especially using the practices in this book. You might not be able to get all of them to 0, but you can probably lower most of them.

### Being alone

Anxiety level:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Importance level:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

### Being rejected

Anxiety level:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Importance level:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

### Bullying

Anxiety level:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Importance level:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

### Class presentations

Anxiety level:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Importance level:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

### Dating, hooking up, and relationships

Anxiety level:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Importance level:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

**Dealing with difficult people**

Anxiety level:        0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10  
Importance level:        0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

**Driving**

Anxiety level:        0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10  
Importance level:        0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

**Fighting in the family**

Anxiety level:        0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10  
Importance level:        0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

**Finding people to hang out with in school**

Anxiety level:        0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10  
Importance level:        0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

**Friends having a hard time**

Anxiety level:        0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10  
Importance level:        0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

**Going to school**

Anxiety level:        0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10  
Importance level:        0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

**Grades**

Anxiety level:        0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10  
Importance level:        0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

**Group social interactions**

Anxiety level:        0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10  
Importance level:        0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

**Having to be perfect**

Anxiety level:        0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10  
Importance level:        0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

**Homesickness**

Anxiety level:        0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10  
Importance level:        0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

**Identity issues (around race, gender, etc.)**

Anxiety level:        0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10  
Importance level:        0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

**Insomnia**

Anxiety level:        0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10  
Importance level:        0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

**Job and college interviews**

Anxiety level:        0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10  
Importance level:        0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

**Losing or breaking my phone**

Anxiety level:        0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10  
Importance level:        0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

**Losing someone I love**

Anxiety level:      0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10  
Importance level:      0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

**Making decisions**

Anxiety level:      0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10  
Importance level:      0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

**My health**

Anxiety level:      0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10  
Importance level:      0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

**One-on-one social interactions**

Anxiety level:      0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10  
Importance level:      0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

**Panic attacks**

Anxiety level:      0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10  
Importance level:      0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

**Parties**

Anxiety level:      0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10  
Importance level:      0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

**Pressure to drink/use drugs/substances**

Anxiety level:      0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10  
Importance level:      0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

**Raising my hand in class**

Anxiety level:      0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10  
 Importance level:      0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

**Social media**

Anxiety level:      0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10  
 Importance level:      0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

**Sports/PE class**

Anxiety level:      0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10  
 Importance level:      0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

**Stage fright**

Anxiety level:      0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10  
 Importance level:      0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

**Studying**

Anxiety level:      0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10  
 Importance level:      0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

**Sunday evenings or Monday mornings**

Anxiety level:      0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10  
 Importance level:      0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

**Talking on the phone**

Anxiety level:      0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10  
 Importance level:      0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10



**Tests and exams**

Anxiety level:      0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

Importance level:      0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

**What I'm doing after high school**

Anxiety level:      0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

Importance level:      0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

**Writer's block**

Anxiety level:      0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

Importance level:      0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

*Add any anxiety triggers that you experience that are not listed above.*

**Trigger:** \_\_\_\_\_

Anxiety level:      0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

Importance level:      0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

**Trigger:** \_\_\_\_\_

Anxiety level:      0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

Importance level:      0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

**Trigger:** \_\_\_\_\_

Anxiety level:      0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

Importance level:      0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

## Exercise: Phobias as Triggers

Phobias are external triggers that cause anxiety. Some people have a phobia about snakes, which is not a problem unless you live in the jungle, work at the zoo, or live in an area where snakes are common. But others have phobias about germs or social situations, which can be pretty hard to avoid without major consequences. List any phobias you have below, and then rate their anxiety and importance levels:

**Phobia:** \_\_\_\_\_

Anxiety level:        0     1     2     3     4     5     6     7     8     9     10

Importance level:        0     1     2     3     4     5     6     7     8     9     10

**Phobia:** \_\_\_\_\_

Anxiety level:        0     1     2     3     4     5     6     7     8     9     10

Importance level:        0     1     2     3     4     5     6     7     8     9     10

**Phobia:** \_\_\_\_\_

Anxiety level:        0     1     2     3     4     5     6     7     8     9     10

Importance level:        0     1     2     3     4     5     6     7     8     9     10

*Are you noticing any patterns at work in your anxieties and phobias? Write those patterns here.*

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## Exercise: Anxiety Record

At the end of each day, write down situations that made you anxious at different times. Record the kinds of thoughts and physical sensations you had for each situation, and then rate your anxiety on a scale from 1 to 10, with 10 being the most anxious.

Day _____				
	Morning	Afternoon	Evening	Nighttime
Situation				
Thoughts				
Physical Sensations				
Anxiety Rating				

*Are there situations or times when you are usually more anxious?*

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*Are there similarities to your triggers? To your symptoms?*

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At the beginning of each week, look at your calendar and think about what you can do before or during those anxious moments that can help you relax a bit. Then add those relaxing activities to your planner or phone calendar.

## Exercise: Coping Activities

There are both healthy and unhealthy ways of coping with anxiety, and you've probably already discovered a few yourself. Do you recognize any of the following in yourself or in people around you who are also anxious? Circle the ones you find yourself doing, and think about whether you could trade some of the less healthy activities for healthier ones.

### Healthy

Crafting  
Dancing  
Doing art or writing  
Doing community service  
Eating a healthy meal  
Exercising  
Listening to music  
Looking at artwork  
Playing music  
Reading  
Spending time with friends,  
family  
Studying  
Taking a shower or bath  
Taking care of your pet  
Time with friends, family

### Unhealthy

Avoiding people or situations  
Bingeing on sweets  
Cutting or self-harm  
Doing drugs  
Drinking alcohol  
Drinking too much caffeine  
Isolating  
Skipping class  
Smoking/vaping

### Okay in Moderation

Food  
Phone or computer time  
Sleeping  
TV or movies

Healthy distractions can be helpful ways to cope with anxiety, but it is important that they not veer into avoidance of other responsibilities in your life.

# The Three *R*'s

My friend Brian talks about mindfulness as just being aware of the three *R*'s: rest, recognize, and return. Start by setting a timer for three to five minutes.

## *Step One: Rest*

First, find a place to *rest* your mind. (Notice I didn't say force your mind.) Just rest your mind on something that keeps you in the present moment—maybe the sounds around you, the sensation of your breathing, or an image or word in your mind.

## *Step Two: Recognize*

While you rest your mind, wait until your mind wanders off. You probably won't have to wait long because your mind is wandering half of the time anyway, remember? Now just *recognize* when and where your mind has gone: anxiety about the party next weekend? regret about your class presentation last period? Every time you recognize that your mind has wandered, you learn that you don't have to believe all your thoughts, and every time you recognize and name where your mind has gone, you calm down the overheated emotional part of your brain and turn on the thinking part of your brain.

## *Step Three: Return*

Now return to whatever anchors you in the present—your breath, sounds around you, or whatever it was. This sounds easy, but the hardest part of this for anxious people is to return *gently*. Notice I didn't say return and tell yourself you are stupid or no good at this. Instead, just return by gently nudging your mind back, as you might guide a pet or a baby back to safety. It's a great chance to practice self-compassion rather than being harsh with yourself.

## *Step Four: Repeat*

Yeah, okay, I guess there can be a fourth *R*—just set a timer and repeat these steps for a few minutes. Remember also that you can do this whenever your mind wanders off into Anxietyland during your busy day. By practicing the three *R*'s, you'll build up those muscles in your brain.

*How hard was this exercise on a scale of 1 to 10? \_\_\_\_\_*

*Do you have thoughts that repeat themselves, or are there places your mind keeps going to again and again?*

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*Was it difficult to be kind to yourself when you were trying to return?*

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*In what kinds of situations do you think it would be helpful to remember the three R's?*

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# Mindfulness Practice: Thoughts on Parade

(adapted from Steve Hayes)

- Take a moment to find a comfortable posture, and begin to bring your awareness to your thoughts.
- Imagine a parade going by on the street, and you are sitting or standing watching the parade go past.
- Now try to imagine each of your thoughts as resting on the floats going past, or perhaps on signs and banners carried by marchers in the parade. Take a few minutes, and just imagine the thoughts passing by.
- Remember, don't join the parade and start marching with the thoughts; just stand back and enjoy the show, knowing that even the biggest thoughts will pass by or be carried away by someone in the parade.

*What did you notice doing this practice?*

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*How do you feel after this practice?*

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## Mindfulness Practice: The Snow Globe

- Find a snow globe, a glitter ball, or even just a jar with some water and sand or glitter, and shake it. Imagine what is floating around as your thoughts, and take a few moments to just watch as they settle. Experiment with shaking it up a lot or a little and just watching and waiting for it to settle. See if you can follow one piece of glitter until it settles on the bottom.
- Now close your eyes and just bring attention to your mind. Try to imagine all of your thoughts settling with each breath. They never go away, but they can move aside and allow more clarity and calm in your own head.

## Exercise: What Your Emotions Feel Like

Remember a time when you felt each of these emotions. If nothing comes to mind, you might want to watch YouTube clips or listen to songs that you know make you feel these ways. Write down what you feel in your body and mind as you experience these emotions.

Emotion	What I Feel in My Body	What I Feel in My Mind
Happiness		
Sadness		
Anger		
Anxiety		

# Mindfulness Practice: Breathing In, Breathing Out

Before you begin this practice, think about how you usually feel in class in your body and mind. Then think about how you *want* to feel in body and mind.

Now, on each in-breath, breathe in what you want to feel. On each out-breath, breathe out what you don't want to feel. For example, if you want to feel calm, relaxed, and at ease, and not feel agitated, stressed, and restless, just try to say those words as you breathe:

- *Breathing in, I breathe in calm...*
- *Breathing out, I breathe out agitation...*
- *Breathing in, I breathe in relaxation ...*
- *Breathing out, I breathe out stress...*
- *Breathing in, I breathe in ease...*
- *Breathing out, I breathe out restlessness...*

Repeat these simple words along with your breath a few times, and see if it helps. Write them down to use later or record them on your phone. If you feel self-conscious, write down the key words rather than the whole meditation.