



32 Ways to Control (Most of) Your Worries

1. Separate obsessive worry from constructive worry. Constructive worry is like an alarm system that contributes to necessary action. Toxic worry is draining, scary, and paralyzing.
2. Use the 50-year rule. Ask yourself, "Will this matter in 50 years? Is what I'm worrying about really so important? Just how much is this worry worth?"
3. Exercise or engage in some constructive activity every day. Exercise and constructive diversion change your brain chemistry and reduce excessive worrying.
4. Turn worries into plans and actions. Worry is only constructive when it spurs you to approach and tackle problems.
5. Talk to people who are positive and reassuring.
6. Talk to people who can listen and give wise advice.
7. Meditate, pray, or do relaxation exercises.
8. Get enough rest and sleep. Fatigue contributes to worrying.
9. Have an action plan to address your worries.
10. Engage in a task or diversion you enjoy. It's hard to worry when you're immersed in an activity that gives you pleasure.
11. Stay away from "doom and gloom" people. Worriers typically talk to other worriers and make themselves more worried.
12. Don't reinforce your worry by reading too much bad news or watching too much television.
13. Don't take drugs or drink to combat worry. It won't ultimately help, but it may actually give you more to worry about.
14. Focus on your strengths.
15. Be a good friend to yourself. Learn how to talk to yourself in a positive, reassuring way.
16. Specify what you're worried about. Are you worried about money? What specifically can you do about it? What small step can you take toward reducing your money worries?
17. Try to stay focused on the present. Most of us live in the past and future. But it's hard to worry when you're living in and appreciating the present moment.
18. Take time in your life to sit quietly. Sitting quietly may enable insights to arise which can help you overcome or leave behind persistent worry.
19. Try to put most of your energy into finding solutions to your problems. Most chronic worriers focus on problems and not solutions.
20. Maintain perspective. When your mood is low, your outlook will be pessimistic. Remember that your down mood is not the truth, but only one view of reality.
21. Don't be shackled by the past. The past is not the present, nor does it have to be your future.
22. Try to diminish or eliminate self-defeating beliefs. Unhappiness and dissatisfaction are not your destiny.
23. Make a commitment to yourself each day to simply drop or cut loose your fearful "doom and gloom" thoughts.
24. Remember how resourceful you've been in the past. Excessive worrying means that you feel vulnerable and lack confidence in your power to make changes. But you've already demonstrated, probably on many occasions, that you can change your life.
25. Think of a time in your life when you were optimistic and full of positive energy. Ask yourself what you can do now to get back on that track.
26. Resolve not to let worry dominate your life.
27. Prepare for and accept the worst possibility, but spend most of your energy working to make the best possibility come about.
28. Notice that each positive action you take reduces fear and worry.
29. Think about your resilience. Remember that you have survived past difficulties and you will survive any to come as well.
30. Be aware of the landslide effect. Your negative and insecure thinking can pile up and overwhelm you. Think of a phrase that can put the brakes on. For example, "Don't worry, be happy." or "Worrying is a waste of energy." The sooner you catch yourself and stop worries from building up, the better.
31. Shake hands with imperfection. Perfectionism and inner peace cannot coexist.
32. Accept that you will never get everything done. You may come close, but there will always be more to do. The name for this condition is life.

(from the Navy and Marine Corps
Public Health Center)

When Does Worry Become a Problem?

Everyday Worry	Anxiety Disorder
Worry about paying bills, landing a job, a romantic breakup, or other important life events	Constant and unsubstantiated worry that causes significant distress and interferes with daily life
Embarrassment or self-consciousness in an uncomfortable or awkward social situation	Avoiding social situations for fear of being judged, embarrassed, or humiliated
A case of nerves or sweating before a big test, business presentation, stage performance or other significant event	Seemingly out-of-the-blue panic attacks and a preoccupation with the fear of having another one
Realistic fear of a dangerous object, place, or situation	Irrational fear or avoidance of an object, place, or situation that poses little or no threat of danger
Making sure that you're healthy and living in a safe, hazard-free environment	Performing uncontrollable repetitive actions such as excessive cleaning, checking, touching, or arranging
Anxiety, sadness, or difficulty sleeping immediately after a traumatic event	Recurring nightmares, flashbacks, or emotional numbing related to a traumatic event that occurred several months or years before

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

—Philippians 4:6-7

