

# Top 10 Things Most Anxious People Do



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# Introduction



Anxiety doesn't wait for a convenient moment to strike.

It hits in the middle of meetings, on dates, in traffic, or at 2am when rest of the world is asleep but your brain won't shut up.

If you're listening to this, you know how overwhelming it can feel—like your body is betraying you and your thoughts have turned against you.

This book contains fast-acting methods to reduce your anxiety, whenever it feels overwhelming.

Try them out and see how they work for you. I hope they are helpful.

This book just scrapes the surface on the many tools that can help you reduce your anxiety, but of course there's a limit to how much a book can help you.

If you'd like to learn more ways you can reduce your anxiety, please email me at [barn@barncoaching.com](mailto:barn@barncoaching.com).

I will personally reply to you and we can discuss ways I might be able to help you.

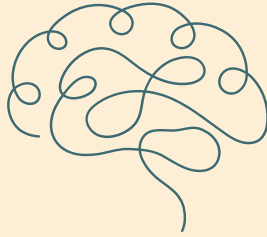
Warm regards,  
Barn



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## Overthinking



You replay conversations, double-check texts, and agonize over whether you made the "right" choice.

But overthinking doesn't protect you—it paralyzes you.

Constant mental replay creates a feedback loop that keeps anxiety front and center.

It keeps you triggered, constantly.



# Overthinking

## What to Do Instead:

Practice making low-stakes decisions quickly, even small decisions:

- what to eat in a restaurant
- what to watch on TV

Build tolerance for uncertainty in small steps:

Say to yourself:

- “No-one is perfect, I don’t need to be perfect and I can’t be perfect. And that is OK. “
- “All I can do is try to be a little better each day”.



## Avoidance



Whether it's skipping social events, dodging difficult conversations, or putting off tasks, avoidance gives anxiety a temporary win.

But every time you avoid, you teach your brain that fear = danger, reinforcing the anxiety cycle.

It puts these tasks into the “never” or “too hard basket”, meaning that the problems usually get worse - which increases your anxiety.



## Avoidance

### **What to Do Instead:**

Start small: break a difficult task into multiple steps, and start with the smallest first step. Then reward.

Embrace the idea that discomfort in small pieces is manageable.

You'll build confidence that discomfort isn't the enemy.

This will help you overcome your idea that discomfort is "impossible" for you.

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## Constant Reassurance



You ask for others' opinions, re-read instructions, and Google your symptoms for the tenth time.

Reassurance feels good for a second, but it feeds the anxiety monster by reinforcing your doubts.

It robs you of the opportunity to calm and reassure yourself.



## Constant Reassurance

### What to Do Instead:

Catch yourself in the act of seeking reassurance:

Delay the reassurance-seeking by 15 minutes.

Over time, increase the delay.

Why not try out self-soothing?

Hug yourself. (I'm serious!). Give yourself a big, warm hug. Tell yourself, it's going to be OK.

You'll be surprised how good you feel.

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# Catastrophizing



Your brain turns a minor issue into a disaster.

A late reply means they're mad at you.

A mistake at work means you're getting fired.

Catastrophic thinking keeps your nervous system in high alert.

It makes you feel that the smallest change, uncertainty will be the end of the world. It's about a lack of confidence that you can handle uncertainty.

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## Catastrophizing

### What to Do Instead:

Practice realistic thinking:

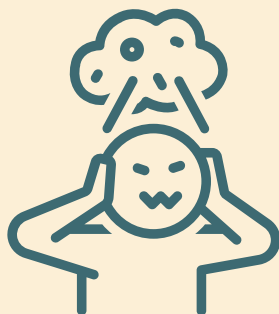
Ask yourself:

- "What's the most likely outcome?"
- "Is it really going to be this bad?"
- "Will this really matter in 10 years' time?"

Try to see that these changes or risks, while unsettling, are usually not going to cause death, the end of the world, or the end of everything.

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## Living in Your Head



Anxiety keeps you spinning in thought, disconnected from your physical self.

You might not even notice how tense your shoulders are or that you haven't taken a deep breath all day.

## What to Do Instead:

Get out of your head, and back into your body:

- Ground yourself.
- Stretch.
- Breathe deeply. Feel the breath go in and out of your mouth and nostrils
- Walk barefoot.
- Move - do somatic exercises, walk the dog, do chair yoga, anything!
- Bring your awareness back to your body regularly.



## Trying to Control Everything



Anxious minds crave certainty.

You plan, over-plan, and micromanage to feel safe.

But the world doesn't run on your schedule, and trying to control everything backfires.

It's just not realistic to assume you can plan for, control or even predict everything that will happen in life. Planes are delayed. People get sick. And the world keeps turning.

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## Trying to Control Everything

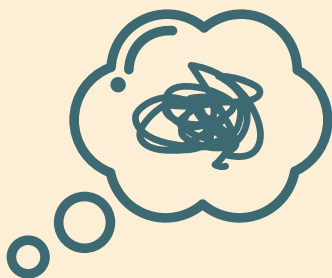
### What to Do Instead:

Loosen the grip:

- Start by letting small things be imperfect.
- Practice accepting that not everything needs a plan.
- Tell yourself: “I can only control myself, and my thoughts. I cannot control the weather, the ocean, other people, world politics or anything else but simple old me. And that’s fine”

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## Negative Self-Talk



You wouldn't speak to a friend the way you speak to yourself.

Constant internal criticism keeps your nervous system in fight-or-flight.

Imagine writing down all your thoughts and directing them at a beloved friend or a loved one like a spouse, child or parent.



## Negative Self-Talk

### What to Do Instead:

Notice your inner dialogue. Would you talk to a friend like that?

Challenge it.

Try talking to yourself like someone you love.

Seriously, try talking to yourself in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person:

“[Your name], it’s ok that you’re not perfect. No-one is perfect, and that’s ok. You still deserve love, respect and good things in life. Being human means being imperfect.”



## Overcommitting and Burning Out



You say yes when you mean no.

You feel guilty about saying no.

You feel like you need to solve other people's problems.

As result, you take on more than you can handle.

Being constantly overwhelmed keeps your anxiety levels high and your resources low.



## Overcommitting and Burning Out

### What to Do Instead:

Set boundaries: is this really your problem? Is this really urgent for your life, or theirs?

Avoid getting forced into a commitment immediately.

Practice saying, "Let me get back to you on that." This buys you time to consider, without external pressure, whether you really should or can give them what they want.

Protect your time and energy: the people asking you for help are certainly protecting theirs!



## Treating Thoughts Like Facts



Just because you think something is true  
doesn't **make** it true.

But when you're anxious, your brain  
treats every negative thought as gospel.

Actually, these negative thoughts are  
often just your worst versions of reality.  
They are not reality, just like your image  
in a mirror is an image, it isn't YOU.

Any more than a photo of you, isn't you.



# Treating Thoughts Like Facts

## What to Do Instead:

Label thoughts as thoughts.

Try saying, "I'm having the thought that..." to create distance.

Imagine your thoughts are people passing you by, as you sit in a cafe. You can wave, smile and nod at them, but you don't have to "talk" to them; i.e. engage with them.

Play around with the 180 degree opposite of the thought. Turn it around: what if the total opposite is true? What evidence do I have for the total opposite version of this?

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## Waiting to Feel Ready



You wait to feel “confident” before applying for a job.

You wait to feel “calm” before speaking up.

You wait to feel “ready” before changing habits.

But you never feel “calm”, “ready” or “confident”. So you never act.

In reality, action often precedes emotion —not the other way around.

## Waiting to Feel Ready

### What to Do Instead:

Act "as if."

For example, tell yourself: "Why don't I just pretend for 5 minutes like I'm a confident person?"

Take small steps even when you don't feel ready. If these are too much, make the first step even smaller, until you can manage to take action.

Confidence follows action.

Emotions follow action. So take action!

# Final Thoughts

*“Your wellbeing is your greatest  
contribution to the world” -  
Sadhguru*

Awareness is the first step to freedom.

The habits in this list are not character flaws—they’re coping strategies that once served a purpose, but may no longer be helpful.

By noticing them, challenging them, and trying new approaches, you take back power from anxiety.

Keep going. You’re doing better than you think.

# Final Thoughts

These are just a few of the techniques I teach inside my full anxiety recovery program.

The techniques above are fast-acting but they are not enough to heal your anxiety over the long term.

There are many more tools and techniques you can learn - if you're ready to take control of your anxiety for good - click the link below!

[Learn more tips at barncoaching.com](https://barncoaching.com)