

CONTROLLING WORRY CHECKLIST

What Is Worry?

- ✓ Worry can either “paralyze” you or spur you on to complete your goals.
- ✓ Analyzing your worries can help you determine if you’re a “worrywart.”
- ✓ A couple of ways to know you worry too much is if you’re constantly worried about a catastrophic event - and if you notice that you worry much more excessively than most people.
- ✓ GAD (Generalized Anxiety Disorder) is a disorder which occurs when you worry on a constant basis. People with GAD can develop physical and mental problems.
- ✓ Excessive worrying causes more stress hormones in the bloodstream which can lead to ulcers, stroke and a number of other stress-related problems.
- ✓ Worry may bring on serious depression side effects, aches and pains and chronic fatigue.
- ✓ Your ability to concentrate on a project or task may be severely hampered by worry and your job and relationships may suffer as a consequence.

Analyze Your Worry

- ✓ Keep a “worry” journal. Be definitive about what’s causing the anxiety and excessive worry in your life.

- ✓ Know that some worry is perfectly normal. If you don't have a job or any savings you'll naturally be worried about keeping a roof over your head and food in your stomach.
- ✓ Most worry issues can be dealt with. You may be overanalyzing your problems and causing excess worry. Panic attacks can occur over absolutely nothing.
- ✓ Include as much information about your worry pattern as you can. When you begin to write down your worries and when they occur, you'll see an emerging pattern. Be very specific.
- ✓ There are online apps that can help. "Worry Watch" and other journaling applications can be downloaded onto your computer or mobile device to help you get instant access to a way of recording your momentary worries.
- ✓ Categorize your worries into topics such as financial, health, family and job. When you search for a solution to your worry problems, you'll be able to quickly see what your worry focus involves.
- ✓ Some worries never leave your mind. Worry about some issues is never far away from your thoughts.

Reducing Worries in General

- ✓ Many worries come from past experiences. If you've experience trauma or anxiety in the past, it's normal to remember these moments at times and worry that the same thing may happen again. Shifting your thoughts to the present may be difficult to stop.
- ✓ Worries also stem from thoughts of the future. You worry about what's going to happen. It's a cycle of "what ifs" that can leave you tired and anxious about the future. Again, it's necessary to learn how to remain in the present moment.

- ✓ Decisive action is the only way to prevent worrying consequences. This is the most difficult thing to do for most chronic worriers. You just can't seem to let go of the worry and take steps to correct the problem.
- ✓ There are some specific actions you can take to stop the worry pattern. For example, you can choose a time span to devote to worrying. That makes it easier to turn off the worry at other times of the day - knowing you're going to have time to worry later on.
- ✓ Stop distorting reality by challenging your worries. Ask yourself if you're distorting the reality of a situation in your mind and that's making you feel more anxious. Cognitive distortions are worries that you know (intellectually) are ridiculous, but can't shake off.
- ✓ Be mindful about your worry pattern. For example, when you worry you tend to focus on the future (what might happen). Being mindful of that can focus you back into the present moment and helps to downgrade the actual problem.

Forget Criticism

- ✓ Emotions are contagious. When people criticize you and you take it personally, you're giving them power over you. You can "catch" those negative thoughts as you would a flu bug.
- ✓ Women, in general, take criticism more personal than males. Studies show that guys seem to have more of an ability to shrug off criticism than women. Women sometimes blame themselves for negative reactions from others.
- ✓ Learn how to separate negative and positive criticism. Criticism sometimes comes from a point of jealousy or other emotions in others. Try to decipher which type of criticism you're hearing.

- ✓ Respond to criticism with dignity and detachment. Taking control of your own emotions is a big and positive step in heading off worry patterns before they happen.
- ✓ Learn from the criticism. There may be some truths in the message that you can take away and better yourself with. Sometimes criticism hurts most when it's near to the truth.
- ✓ Ignore criticism which is delivered in anger or frustration. The object of the criticism may be to make you feel bad about something. Ignoring it can put the critic off guard and end the criticizing.
- ✓ Don't take criticism personally. Most criticism is subjective and every situation may be viewed differently by a host of people.

Living a Worry-Free Life

- ✓ Free of chronic aches and pains, digestive problems, fatigue and depression.
- ✓ Belief in yourself - that you do have the ability to learn new skills and the confidence to carry through on your goals and ambitions.
- ✓ Peaceful sleep. A good night's sleep, free of waking in a cold sweat with worry in the middle of the night can do wonders for your day.
- ✓ Eliminate uncertainty in your life. Because your mind is clearer, you can see things and problems for what they are and get the answers you need.
- ✓ Know how to use "productive worry" to get your act together rather than useless non-productive worry which leads to accomplishing nothing.

- ✓ Learn how to accept that there may be bad outcomes to certain situations, but you can learn from these outcomes and give yourself another chance.
- ✓ Gain control of your own actions in every situation. Each and every situation is different and some outcomes will be negative while others are positive. Only you can control your reaction.
- ✓ Learn how to let go of worry when it's infiltrating your mind and making you anxious. You may use various techniques or just one method that works for you. For example, Tai Chi may work for some, whereas setting aside a certain amount of time designated just for worrying may work for others.