

Practice Postponing Worry

Worry Feels Insistent

Worry is demanding, unrelenting, and incessant. Worry feels uncontrollable, time consuming, and immediate. It makes you feel as though you have to drop everything to engage with it *right now*.

Experiment postponing your worries by deliberately setting aside a specific yet limited time to do nothing but worry.

Step 1: Preparation

Decide when your worry time will be and for how long

“Worry time” is a moment you set aside every day for the sole purpose of worrying. Give yourself a time limit, 15 to 30 minutes is often a good starting point, and block it into your calendar.

Step 2: Worry Postponement

During the day, decide if the worries that surface are a “real problem” you can act on immediately, or if it is a hypothetical worry that can be postponed.

If the problem is a hypothetical, fears about things that *might* happen, postpone thinking about it until the designated worry time.

Redirect your attention to the present by:

- Using your senses (sight, sound, touch, smell, or taste)
- Focusing your attention on something external
- Telling yourself “I’m not going to engage in this worry now, I will later”.

Step 3: Worry Time

Use your dedicated worry time for worrying.

Write down any of the hypothetical worries you remember having had throughout the day.

Ask yourself:

- How concerning are they to you now and; do they give you the same emotional jolt when you think about them now as they did when you first thought of them?
- Can any of the worries lead you to take practical action?
- Use all of your allocated worry time, even if you do not feel you have much to worry about, or even if worries do not seem as pressing at this time.

Adapted from Living With Worry and Anxiety Amidst Global Uncertainty, Psychology Tools