



# GEORGE'S CARDS AGAINST ANXIETY

The following set of cards have been designed and tested by George Salter Students, who themselves, have struggled with managing feelings of anxiety, fear and panic.

Remember, most people feel anxious or scared sometimes, but if it is affecting your day to day life, we need to explore strategies that can help reduce the feeling and settle your thoughts.

These cards are designed to simply pick up (or scroll through) and practice. Simply pick a card, practice the strategy and if it doesn't work – pick another card and try another one, two or three.

For further advice on managing anxiety, see Young minds

# puppy train your mind

An unfocused mind is often an anxious one. For a minute, train your brain to focus on a simple action, such as eating a single square of chocolate. Immerse yourself in your senses, and let everything else pass you by.

01. stop
02. focus on one thing
03. immerse yourself in your senses
04. let everything else pass you by

# bodyscan

This exercise takes you within, which takes your attention away from external irritants and your stressy mind. You start at your toes, as far away from your mind as you can get and still be in your body. Don't judge or try to change anything



01. direct your attention inside your body
02. start with the tippy-toes
03. go up through the body
04. gently refocus the mind
05. end at your crown

# so what?

If you are going round and around about things that might never happen, try the 'so what?' approach. If it helps, shove a profanity in between the 'so' and the 'what', go for it. Stop and understand more about the nature of your current worries, and make an active decision about what's worth the worry and what you can let go

01. list each of your worries
02. find the what-ifs for each worry
03. counter as many as possible with a so-what?
04. work out the practical steps to alleviate the leftover worries

Tip.....

when other people overboard you with their own worries, say to yourself "not my circus, not my monkeys"

# water water

Let calmness flow in and the anxiety flow out as you slowly drink cold water. Focusing on the feeling as it passes down your throat can distract your mind from worry

01. get some water
02. sit down
03. sip up
04. notice the feel and taste
05. allow other thoughts to pass by
06. imagine your anxiety draining away

# list it list it list it

When you are overwhelmed, a to-do list can help you find clarity. Include everything, big and small. Strike through the unimportant, then tackle the simplest task first- a quick win can restore your sense of control

01. list what's on your mind
02. do or dump?
03. look for quick wins
04. delegate what you can
05. decide a time or action for the rest

# fake it

When you just can't shake it, fake it! Cheat your way to chill-out. First imagine how calm you would like to feel and then act it out: smile, breathe deep, stand and walk tall. After 10 minutes, check out how the real you feels.

01. how do you wish to feel?
02. fake it- facial expression
03. fake it- breathing
04. fake it- walking and talking
05. try it for ten

Tip.....

This is a quick fix, not a long-term strategy



# ♥worry date♥

Rather than worrying right now, make the decision to do it later. Scheduling your worry is a way of giving yourself permission to relax into a worry-free present. It's a date!

01. stop and notice your worry
02. set a worry time
03. embrace a worry-free now
04. worry at the set time

# shoot the parrot

Pissing yourself? Imagine negative self-talk is coming from a bad-tempered parrot squawking down your ear. Wo/man up, take aim and shoot it off its perch.

01. hear the squawking
02. find the parrot
03. shoot the parrot
04. shoot it again

# BFF yourself

Notice when you are talking down to yourself and then imagine sharing these harsh self-criticisms with your kindest friend. What would they say? Hear their words and let yourself believe them. Why not try this for real life and share your list of negatives with your BFF, your grandma or your pet?

meow

01. notice you are hating on yourself
02. write it down
03. imagine giving this list to someone who cares about you
04. what would they say?
05. whose truth is right?

# square breathing

Be square! This four-by-four technique is a way to take charge of your breathing. A version is used in the military—they call it 'combat breathing' to make it sound hard-core, but anyone can do it. Imagining a parade-ground sergeant shouting marching orders (if you find that motivational), but remember, this is supposed to be relaxing

01. breathe in, count 1, 2, 3, 4

04. hold, 2, 3, 4

02. hold, 2, 3, 4

05. and again

03. out, 2, 3, 4

Tip.....

Trace or square on your palm with your finger as you count

# let it rip

Free your mind from those anxious thoughts by writing them down. Once you've got it all out rip the paper into tiny pieces and throw them in the bin.

01. get a pen and paper

02. write out what you are thinking

03. rip up the paper

don't censor it!

# stand up straight

Standing up straight can hit anxiety where it hurts. When we're feeling anxious, we tend to make ourselves small— it's a way of shrinking away from the world and hoping nobody notices us. Instead, make like a superhero and stand tall— don't be afraid to take up space

01. feet flat on the floor

02. stand tall

03. take a deep breath and broaden the chest

# the big squeeze

Nothing zaps anxiety like a workout. But if you can't get to the gym, a good clench-and-release is a close second: it's an instant, anytime way to expend a little nervous energy

01. Clench all your muscles and breathe in
02. hold it for a count of 10
03. breathe out slowly as you release the tension
04. repeat

# rate it

What's your anxiety rating? This hyper-quick exercise is based on the fact that— even though your body might hit the anxiety heights— it won't stay there but will start coming back to a state of equilibrium pretty rapidly. When we're at peak panic, giving ourselves permission to get through it one minute at a time makes things a whole lot more manageable

01. rate your anxiety from 1 to 10
02. set a timer for 1 minute
03. remember, all things pass
04. rate your anxiety from 1 to 10
05. repeat if needed

# write without thinking

Pushing feelings away can make them come back even stronger. When you are in wobbly mode, try simply allowing the feelings to be there. When we stop rejecting our feelings, they get easier to live with

01. I am feeling...
02. because...
03. it's okay to have feelings
04. be kind to yourself



# all the feels

When your mind is spinning, feelings and facts can jumble into a total mishmash. Repeat after me: feelings are not facts. Separating what you are feeling from the actual facts of what is going on can help you to take effective action to sort a problem out. So stop. Work out what's the mish and what's the mash

01. what's wrong?
02. facts or feelings?
03. what's driving your actions?
04. act on fact

# hands on

Feel your way to peace by tracing a path around the thumb and fingers with a finger from your other hand. Breathe in and out as you move up and down the fingers. Using a soft touch can prompt you to soften the breath quite naturally

01. take one hand
02. breathe around your thumb
03. breathe around your fingers

# bliss out



If things are tough, think of a time when you felt happy and free. Research shows that you can boost your mood by reflecting on a positive memory. What's your favourite bliss moment?

01. think of a bliss moment
02. retrieve the data
03. get with the feelings
04. have a memory-fest
05. inspire yourself



# love your belly

When we are anxious, our breathing tends to get shallow, short and ragged. We can make our way back to calm through conscious belly breathing. Get comfy and rest a hand on your belly. Breathe in deeply through the nose and feel your belly expand outwards. Then breathe out through your mouth as the belly relaxes back

01. feel your belly
02. free the belly
03. just 3 breaths
04. belly rub

# takk , thanks ♡♡

Takk means 'thanks' in Norwegian— mentioned because it is a great word and it is good for the soul to know how to say thank you in other languages. This gratitude exercise gives you new ways to say takk, because there really is plenty to be takk-ful for

01. I'm thankful for this person...
02. I'm thankful for this place...
03. I'm thankful for this experience...
04. I'm thankful for this mistake...



# pace it out ♡ ♡

So anxious you can't sit still? Move your body and move anxiety along. Find a bigish space and start pacing back and forth, really feeling the sensations in the soles of the feet. Start off at a speed that feels right— if your heart is racing, power walk

01. find a space to walk back and forth
02. get going
03. feel your soles
04. keep going





# count the c o l o u r s



You can do this absolutely anywhere and with any colour. It flicks you out of stress-head mode and into your surroundings. And it's a fun distraction from whatever you are worrying about

01. find something (insert colour)
02. how many (insert colour) things can you see?
03. how many (insert colour) things can you imagine?

# count down from 5



When you feel yourself edging closer to the panic precipice, use 54321 to take yourself back to safety. This technique is a more grown-up version of I-spy- with the added complication that you have to count down from five

01. what FIVE things can you see?
02. what FOUR things can you hear?
03. what THREE things can you smell?
04. what TWO things can you touch?
05. what ONE things can you taste?

# find your happyplace

When all else fails, go to your happyplace. This is a zen zone within your mind, one you can escape to any time life sucks. Everyone's happyplace is different. The more you practice going to your happyplace, the easier it gets: soon, no matter how stressful your current surroundings are, you'll be able to take time out in your head and return to a feeling of calm and safety

01. escape somewhere quiet
02. imagine yourself in your happyplace
03. add the specifics

# 3 good things

There is always a bright spot.  
Seek it out. Because being even  
a teeny bit thankful is good  
for your state of mind.  
Research has shown that  
doing regular gratitude  
exercises can make a dent in  
depression and anxiety, plus  
it can give you an instant  
uplift at the time you do it.

01. think over your  
day so far

03. make note of  
them

02. nail 3 good things

04. enjoy the memory