

Hierarchy of Fears

This worksheet is designed to help you systematically confront and overcome your anxiety by gradually exposing yourself to the feared object or situation. Start by identifying your specific anxiety triggers, then break them down into smaller, manageable steps, and rank these steps from least to most anxiety-provoking. Then, systematically work through each step, starting with the least threatening and gradually progressing to more challenging ones.

STEP 1: What is your primary fear? (Example page.)

Example: Fear of flying.

STEP 2: List smaller fears that are related to your primary fear.

1. Watching videos of airplanes taking off and landing.

2. Reading articles about flying.

3. Visiting an airport without boarding a plane.

4. Sitting in a stationary airplane.

5. Booking a flight ticket.

6. Walking through the boarding gate.

7. Sitting in an airplane during a short flight.

STEP 3: Rank these fears from 1 (low anxiety) to 10 (high anxiety).

Situation That Triggers Your Fear	Anxiety Level
1. Watching videos of airplanes taking off and landing.	2
2. Reading articles about flying.	3
3. Visiting an airport without boarding a plane.	5
4. Sitting in a stationary airplane.	6
5. Booking a flight ticket.	7
6. Walking through the boarding gate.	8
7. Sitting in an airplane during a short flight.	10



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STEP 4: Plan your exposures, starting with the least anxiety-provoking step. (Example page.)

Fear Being Conquered	Coping Skills I Will Use	Due Date	Anxiety Before	Anxiety After
1. <i>Watching videos of airplanes taking off & landing.</i>	<i>Deep breathing, visualization of safe flight</i>	<i>5/1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>0</i>
2. <i>Reading articles about flying.</i>	<i>Taking breaks to ground, support from a friend</i>	<i>5/7</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>1</i>
3. <i>Visiting an airport without boarding a plane.</i>	<i>Support from a friend, practicing grounding exercises</i>	<i>5/11</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>2</i>
4. <i>Sitting in a stationary airplane.</i>	<i>Listen to music, progressive muscle relaxation</i>	<i>5/17</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>4</i>
5. <i>Booking a flight ticket.</i>	<i>Rational thinking, support from a friend via phone call</i>	<i>5/21</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>3</i>
6. <i>Walking through the boarding gate.</i>	<i>Deep breathing, mindfulness, focusing on one step</i>	<i>6/1</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>6</i>
7. <i>Sitting in an airplane during a short flight.</i>	<i>Visualization of a smooth flight, positive self-talk, listening to calming music</i>	<i>6/7</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>7</i>

JOURNAL: Questions to ask yourself throughout the exposure process.

What was my experience with this step?

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Were the coping skills I used effective?

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Do I need to break down any steps further or add new steps?

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STEP 1: What is your primary fear?

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STEP 2: List smaller fears that are related to your primary fear.

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STEP 3: Rank these fears from 1 (low anxiety) to 10 (high anxiety).

Situation That Triggers Your Fear	Anxiety Level
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STEP 4: Plan your exposures, starting with the least anxiety-provoking step.

Fear Being Conquered	Coping Skills I Will Use	Due Date	Anxiety Before	Anxiety After
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Additional Resources to Support Your Mental Health Journey

It can be hard to know where to begin looking for support in your mental health journey. Getting a referral from a primary care physician is a reliable first step. Also, sometimes family and friends have experienced similar issues and have professionals they would recommend. The experts at ChoosingTherapy.com are here to help as well, with resources we have reviewed and recommend. Our [strict editorial standards](#) ensure our reviews are fair, honest, thorough, and based on firsthand experience.

You Can Trust ChoosingTherapy.com



300+
Companies Reviewed



2,350+
Hours of Firsthand Experience



1,150+
Data Points Analyzed



[Best Online Therapy](#)

Online therapy is a convenient way to connect with a licensed therapist to address mental health issues, reduce unhealthy behaviors, develop effective coping skills, and get more satisfaction out of life. Many companies accept insurance and most have next-day appointments available.

[Best Online Psychiatry](#)

Online psychiatry providers enable patients to consult with licensed psychiatrists and other mental health professionals. They can evaluate, diagnose, and prescribe medication to help manage mental health issues. Many companies accept insurance and most have next-day appointments available.



[Best Mental Health Apps](#)

Apps can be great way to monitor mood, track sleep, journal, and practice healthy coping skills like mindfulness and meditation. There are apps specifically designed to help people reduce the symptoms of depression, anxiety, ADHD, chronic stress, and burnout.

[Therapist Directory](#)

When you're looking for a mental health provider with a very particular skill set, level of experience, or personality type, a therapist directory can be very helpful. Using the filters, you can refine your search until you find a therapist who feels like a perfect fit.

