Worry time

Postpone worrying to one set time each day.

Worrying on and off all day keeps your mind on high alert. Setting aside one short period to worry on purpose teaches your mind that worry can wait, and that you are in charge of when it happens.

How to do it

1. **Pick a time and place.** Fifteen to twenty minutes, at the same time each day. Not in bed, and not in the hour before sleep.
2. **During the day, catch and postpone.** When a worry arrives, jot down a word or two and tell yourself, "Not now. I will think about that at half six."
3. **Come back to the present.** Turn your attention to what you were doing. The worry will tug at you. Postpone it again.
4. **Keep the appointment.** At worry time, take out your list. Worry about anything on it that still matters.
5. **Sort as you go.** If a worry is a real problem, write a next step. If it is a "what if", let it be.
6. **Stop when the time is up.** Close the notebook and do something absorbing.

What people usually find

- Many worries no longer seem important by the time worry time comes round.
- Worrying on purpose is surprisingly hard to keep up for twenty minutes.
- The urge to worry "right now" gets weaker with practice.

My worry time	What I will do straight afterwards
When and where?	Something that holds my attention

If it feels impossible

Postponing gets easier with repetition. Aim to put off a worry for ten minutes at first, then build up.

Worry time is based on the stimulus control approach to worry developed by Thomas Borkovec.

© 2026 Patrick O'Hare Therapy · patrickoharetherapy.com

This handout supports your therapy. It does not replace professional advice.

Postponed worries

A list for the worries you have put off until worry time.

Name _____ Date _____

Time	The worry, in a few words	Still matters at worry time?	What I did with it
10.40	*Did I offend Sarah yesterday?*	*No*	*Let it go*

What have I noticed this week about postponing worry?

© 2026 Patrick O'Hare Therapy · patrickoharetherapy.com
This handout supports your therapy. It does not replace professional advice.