Anxiety: what helps and what keeps it going

A one-page summary of what makes anxiety worse and what brings it down.

Keeps anxiety going

- Avoiding the things I fear
- Leaving as soon as I feel anxious
- Asking for reassurance again and again
- Checking, over-planning and over-preparing
- Watching my body for signs of trouble
- Trying to push thoughts away
- Using alcohol to take the edge off
- Believing every "what if"

Helps over time

- Facing fears in small, repeated steps
- Staying until the anxiety settles
- Letting uncertainty be there
- Doing things once, well enough
- Turning my attention outwards
- Letting thoughts come and go
- Looking after sleep, food and movement
- Asking "what is most likely?"

Everyday foundations

- **Caffeine.** It mimics anxiety in the body. If you are jittery, try cutting back gradually and see what changes.
- **Sleep.** Tiredness makes anxiety worse. Keep a regular wind-down and wake-up time.
- **Movement.** Regular exercise burns off stress hormones and is one of the best-supported ways to reduce anxiety.
- **Alcohol.** It calms for an hour or two, then makes anxiety worse the next day.
- **Company.** Time with people you are comfortable with helps you feel calmer.

In short

Doing the opposite of what anxiety tells you, a little at a time, reduces it.

A habit I want to drop	What I will do instead	When I will start

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