Theresa Babbs-Durrant

MENTAL HEALTH COACH & THERAPIST

The Anxiety Reset Guide

Understand it, settle it, and plan for it

Before you begin
This guide offers general information and self-help ideas that many people find useful. It is not treatment, and it isn't a substitute for advice from your GP or a qualified therapist. It can't tell you whether you have an anxiety condition. If anxiety is persistent, intense or affecting daily life, please speak to your GP.

This resource is for personal reflection and general information only. It is not a diagnostic tool, a clinical assessment or a substitute for professional advice, diagnosis or treatment, and it cannot tell you whether you have a mental health condition. Your answers stay with you. They are not collected or reviewed by me. This resource is for adults (18+).

A safety note
Chest pain, severe breathlessness or symptoms that feel like a medical emergency should never be assumed to be anxiety. Call 999 or seek urgent medical help.

1. What anxiety is doing

Anxiety is the body's alarm system. It's common, understandable and can be very uncomfortable. It often becomes a cycle:

- Something triggers the alarm (a thought, a sensation, a situation).
- The body and mind respond: racing thoughts, a tight chest, a restless stomach.
- We do something to feel safer: avoid, seek reassurance, or go over and over it in our minds.
- That brings relief now, but it can teach the brain that the alarm was needed, so it may ring louder next time.

None of these responses is a flaw. They are attempts to feel safe. Noticing the cycle is the first step towards loosening it.

2. Map my cycle

Trigger	Thoughts	Body	What I do	What happens next
A long to-do list	*“I’ll never get this done”*	*Tight chest, shallow breath*	*Scroll on my phone*	*Brief relief, then more pressure*

3. Where I notice anxiety in my body

- [ ] Racing heart
- [ ] Shallow breathing
- [ ] Tight jaw or shoulders
- [ ] Difficulty concentrating
- [ ] Tight chest
- [ ] Stomach tension
- [ ] Restlessness
- [ ] Trouble sleeping

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4. Three five-minute resets

Reset 1: Slow breathing
Breathe in gently for a count of four and out for a count of six. Continue for two to five minutes. If breathing exercises make you feel light-headed or more anxious, stop and try Reset 2 instead.

Reset 2: Grounding (5-4-3-2-1)
Notice five things you can see, four you can touch, three you can hear, two you can smell and one you can taste. This brings attention back to the present moment.

Reset 3: The worry window
Choose ten minutes a day to write your worries down. For each one, ask: is there something I can do about this? If yes, note one small next step. If not, notice that, and let it rest on the page until tomorrow.

5. A gentler way through the 3am mind

- Keep the lights low and avoid watching the clock.
- Keep paper by the bed and write the worry down so it has somewhere to go.
- Slow your out-breath.
- Tell yourself: “This is a 3am thought. I'll look at it again in daylight.”

If poor sleep and worry have become a pattern rather than a bad night, it's worth speaking to your GP. Sleep and anxiety often affect each other.

6. A small step towards something I've been avoiding

Avoidance brings relief today but can shrink confidence over time. Choose something small, and only something that feels manageable. If the thing you're avoiding feels overwhelming, a therapist can help you plan steps at a safe pace.

Something I’ve been avoiding:

A very small step towards it:

7. My personal reset card

My early warning signs	My three go-to resets	One person I can contact	A reassuring sentence for me

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When to seek support

Consider speaking to your GP or a qualified therapist if anxiety has been present most days for a few weeks, is limiting what you do, comes with panic or physical symptoms, or just feels like too much to manage alone

If you need support now

- In an emergency, or if you feel you can't keep yourself safe: call 999.
- Samaritans (free, 24 hours): 116 123.
- Shout (free text support, 24 hours): text SHOUT to 85258.
- Northern Ireland: Lifeline (free, 24 hours): 0808 808 8000.
- If a relationship feels unsafe: National Domestic Abuse Helpline (England) 0808 2000 247, 24 hours. Domestic and Sexual Abuse Helpline (Northern Ireland) 0808 802 1414, 24 hours. In Scotland and Wales, please search for your national domestic abuse helpline.

Worried about your health? Speak to your GP. Out of hours, call NHS 111 in England, Scotland or Wales. In Northern Ireland, your GP surgery will direct you to the out-of-hours service.

If you'd like to talk it through

If something here resonated and you'd like help making sense of it, I'd be glad to hear from you. You are welcome to book a free, no-obligation consultation. There's no pressure to, and nothing in this resource needs to be shared with me.

Providing Counselling Services
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