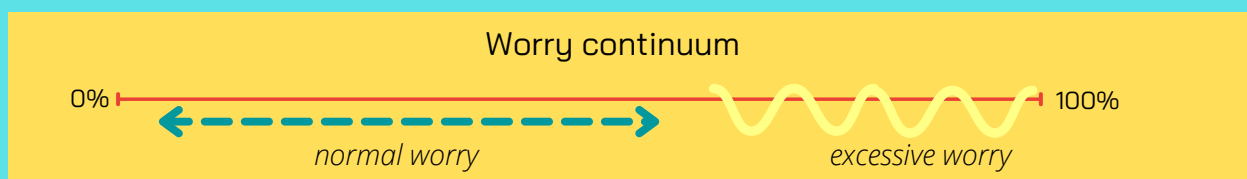


# WORRY MANAGEMENT

Worry is a **normal** thinking process. It takes our attention into the **future** and we question or imagine what might happen. If we think of worry as being on a continuum there is a 'normal' range where we move up and down depending on what is happening in our lives. When we worry excessively it leads to symptoms of anxiety including muscular tension, unpleasant sensations in our stomach such as butterflies or churning and headaches.



## Worry awareness

When we worry it is often about things we aren't sure about and want answers to. They normally start with a '**what if...?**' and can lead to a worst case scenario very quickly. At this point our thinking becomes very **threat** focused which fuels our anxiety. Not all worries will have answers as they can be **hypothetical** (may never happen). However, some worries are about **problems** that do require our attention such as tasks we have been avoiding. Recognising the difference between these two types of worry is helpful to identify what requires action and what does not.

## Monitoring worries

Keeping a worry diary is a useful activity. It helps you to get the worries out of your head and onto paper which can help to diffuse them. It also allows you to identify if they are problems or hypothetical worries (what ifs...?).

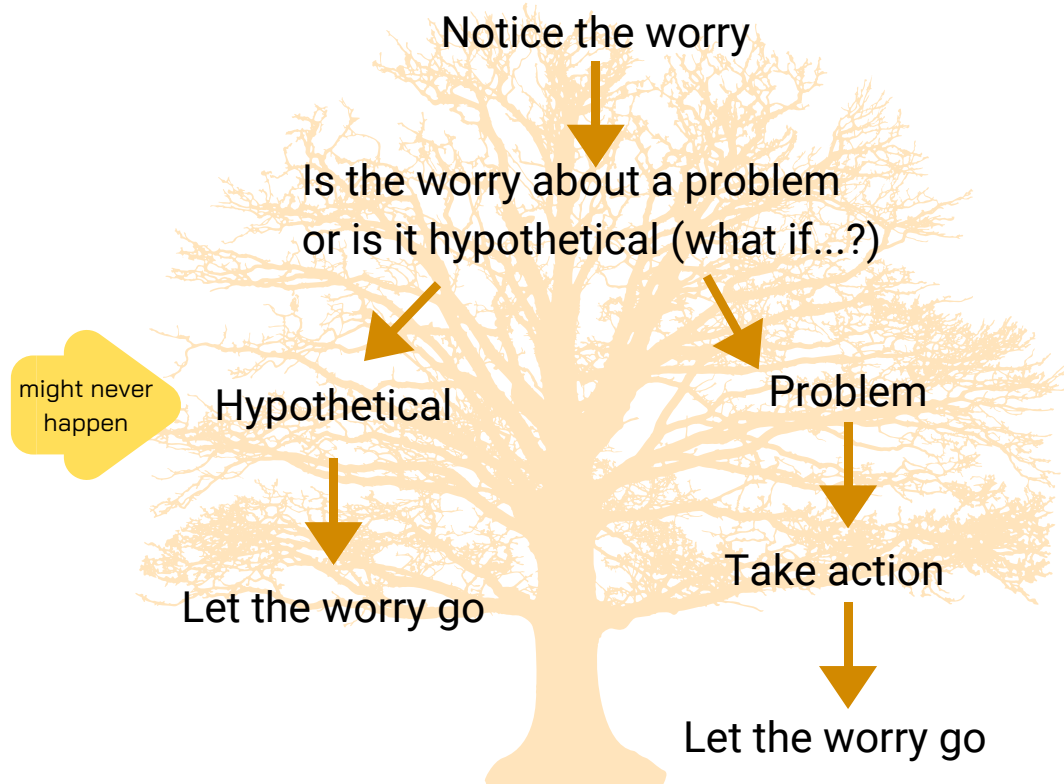


Download a worry diary here, or use the one at the back of this guide:

<https://www.italk.org.uk/uploads/downloads/Worry%20Diary.pdf>

## Worry Tree

The worry tree is a simple and effective formula for recognising and managing excessive worry



## Worry Time Technique

The idea with **WORRY TIME** is to provide a designated time when you allow yourself to think about all the worries that have popped into your head throughout the day. It is not designed to **STOP** worry but to **REDUCE** the time we spend thinking about things that are beyond our control.

### Step

1

Set up your  
worry time  
Where? When?  
How long?

### Step

2

Postpone your  
worries at all times  
other than your worry  
time. Write them  
down and review at  
worry time

### Step

3

At worry time  
use the worry  
tree to see if  
action is needed

## Problem solving



For worries that are actual problems then applying simple problem solving strategies will allow you to take action and let that particular worry go.

1. identify the problem
2. generate multiple potential solutions
3. weigh up the pros and cons of each
4. choose one and test it
5. review - if problem not solved try another solution

Download worksheet here: <https://www.therapistaid.com/worksheets/problem-solving.pdf>

## Progressive muscle relaxation

Progressive muscle relaxation (PMR) is an exercise to reduce stress and tension in your body. By tensing then relaxing each muscle group in your body you will feel an immediate sense of relaxation. It needs to be practiced regularly as it can significantly reduce anxiety on a daily basis. There is good research evidence for its effectiveness in a number of conditions including cancer, insomnia and Generalised Anxiety Disorder (GAD).

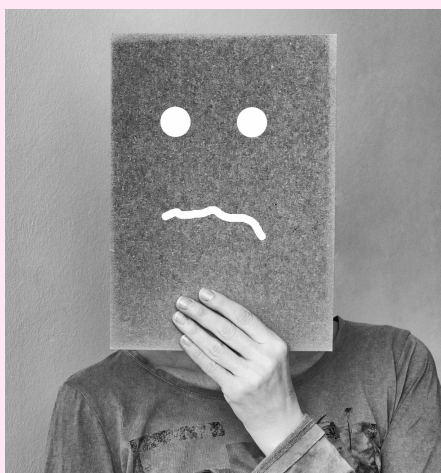
See the PMR script at the end of this guide for more information on how to do it.



## Tolerating uncertainty

When you like to feel in control you are likely to try and seek certainty. This can manifest in many behaviours such as excessive checking, lists, reassurance seeking and a need for lots of information. Sometimes uncertainty can make us avoid things such as making decisions or doing tasks we may not be sure of.

Rather than seeking more certainty (by trying to control situations or prevent harmful outcomes) it is more helpful to **tolerate uncertainty** – recognising that we cannot control everything. So try dropping your safety behaviours and see what happens.



Click here for more information on how cognitive behavioural therapy can help you to tolerate uncertainty:  
<https://www.anxietycanada.com/sites/default/files/ToleratingUncertainty.pdf>

# WORRY DIARY

**Remember:** Ask yourself “can I do anything about this right now?”

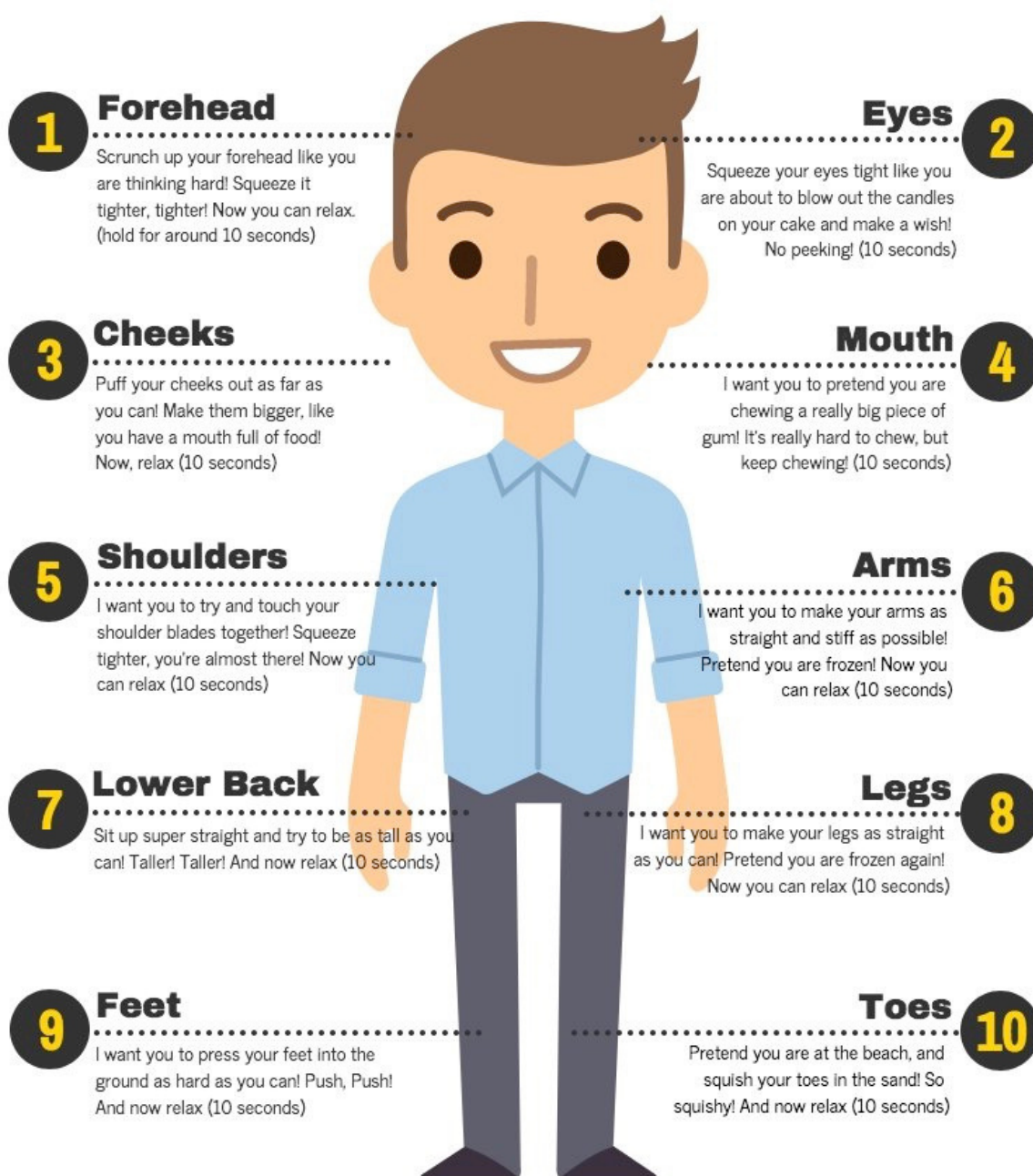
- If no – it’s a hypothetical worry, use Worry Time
- If yes – it’s a practical worry, use problem solving

Date / Time	What I’m worried about	How anxious I feel out of 10	Type of worry <i>Hypothetical or practical</i>	What I will do <i>Worry time or problem-solving</i>



# Progressive Muscle Relaxation

## Whole Body Script



Tykes of Tomorrow

See this guide for a full script: <https://www.therapistaid.com/worksheets/progressive-muscle-relaxation-script.pdf>

Listen to a video version: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=86HJpK8ZtAk&t=1R4s>