

Panic Attack Worksheets

By Inner Health Studio

www.innerhealthstudio.com

Inner Health Studio: Coping Skills and Relaxation Resources

These panic attack worksheets will help you record details about your panic attacks, look for trends, and identify effective coping strategies. Learn how to get rid of panic attacks with these worksheets.

Symptoms of Panic Attacks

Common Symptoms of Panic:

- Racing heart
- Heart palpitations
- Chest pain or discomfort
- Difficulty breathing
- Vision problems
- Nausea
- Shaking
- Sweating
- Dizziness
- Numbness or tingling, usually of hands or face
- Fear
- Feeling like you are going to die

Describe Your Panic Attacks

Complete this information based on what you can remember about panic attacks you have experienced in the past. Then use the panic attacks journal to see how accurate your perceptions are.

Today's date: _____

How often do your panic attacks occur?

What symptoms do you experience?

How long do the panic attacks last?

What helps the panic attacks go away?

Describe your first panic attack:

Describe your most recent panic attack:

Panic Attacks Journal

Use this panic attacks journal to record details about the panic you experience. Use the journal for one week. Each time you experience a panic attack, fill out the following information.

Date and time now: _____

When did the panic attack happen?

Date: _____

Time: _____

Where were you when the panic attack started?

Symptoms (list the symptoms you experienced during the panic attack):

Duration (how long did the panic attack last?):

Triggers (anything that seemed to cause the panic attack):

What you were doing when it started?

What did you do during the panic attack?

What you were doing when the panic attack ended?

Did the panic attack begin suddenly or gradually? Did it end suddenly or gradually? How long did it take to go away?

What did you think was happening? When did you realize that this event was a panic attack?

Additional thoughts or comments:

Trends and Patterns

After using the panic attacks journal for one week, look at trends in these panic attacks.

Number of panic attacks experienced in one week:

Shortest Panic Attack:

Longest Panic Attack:

Average length of time each panic attack lasted:

What were you usually doing when panic attacks started?

How did the panic attacks end?

Do you see any patterns?

Panic Attack Patterns

By analyzing your own patterns and getting as much information as you can about your panic attacks, you can make an action plan to get rid of panic attacks and decrease anxiety.

Patterns may indicate:

- Possible panic attack triggers (people, places, events, thoughts, etc) that may cause panic attacks
- Ways to decrease panic attacks
- Ways to end panic attacks
- How long to expect panic attacks to last (you can anticipate when the anxiety attack will be over)
- Times of day that tend to be the best and the worst for having panic attacks

Summarize your panic attack patterns

Possible triggers:

Ways to decrease panic attacks:

Ways to end panic attacks:

How long to expect panic attacks to last:

Times of day that tend to be the best and the worst for having panic attacks:

Compare the information outlined in your panic attack journal with the questions you answered at the beginning of these worksheets. How accurate was your assessment of your panic attacks?

Effective Coping with Panic Attacks

There are a several strategies for coping with panic attacks. It is usually most effective to try a variety of strategies when dealing with panic. You can use the patterns you identified in the panic attack worksheets to help find coping strategies that will work for you.

Reduce Triggers or Work on Desensitization to the Triggers

If you see patterns in triggers for panic attacks, you can deal with these causes of anxiety. For example, if your panic attack worksheets show that panic attacks occur most often during grocery shopping in a busy store, you may conclude that being around crowds triggers panic attacks. As a solution to prevent panic attacks, you might decide to grocery shop early in the morning when the store is not busy. Or you may choose to desensitize yourself to crowds by gradually increasing your exposure to busy places until you no longer react with panic and anxiety in crowds.

Don't Fight the Anxiety

Fighting the anxiety makes panic attacks stronger. Try to go with the anxiety, allowing yourself to feel anxious. Often, the anxiety will go away as soon as you stop resisting.

Use Calming Self-Talk

Looking over your panic attack journal, you will notice how long panic attacks usually last for you. For example, if your panic attacks usually lasted for 10 minutes, the next time you experience a panic attack, you know that it will be over in about 10 minutes. You can use calming self-talk to help you get through this time and cope until the anxiety attack is over.

Use phrases such as:

“I am afraid right now, but I know this will pass.”

“This anxiety is not going to last long. I know it will be over soon.”

“It's okay to be anxious. I just need to wait it out until I feel better.”

“Only 5 more minutes, and I'll be doing just fine.”

“Nothing dangerous is happening right now. Even though I feel afraid, I am safe.”

Do the Things that Helped

Pay special attention to what you were doing when the panic attacks ended. If there is a behavior that seemed to correlate with the time the panic attacks subsided, try doing that action the next time you have a panic attack. Perhaps it will help the panic attack stop sooner. For example, if you notice in your panic attack worksheets that some of your panic attacks ended around the same time you phoned a friend, try calling a friend the next time you have a panic attack.

Adjust Your Schedule

During particular times of day your anxiety may be high or low. If you see patterns, you can adjust your schedule to incorporate helpful coping skills. For example, if your panic attacks often happen in the morning, you might try using relaxation techniques as soon as you wake up. The relaxation can prevent panic attacks by helping you to be more calm.

Do the day's most stressful and demanding activities when you tend to be the most calm and focused. Schedule relaxing activities (reading, relaxation techniques, exercise, etc) for the times that your anxiety and panic attacks tend to be the worst.

Exposure: Get Rid of Panic Attacks for Good

The coping methods above will help to decrease panic attacks, and help anxiety go away in the moment. To really eliminate panic attacks, however, it is necessary to use exposure. Exposure is the process of exposing yourself to the panic, feared situations, or triggers. If you want to try using exposure, it is advisable to consult a professional (such as a therapist) who can help guide you through the process.

Here's how it works. Suppose you have a phobia of heights. Exposure would be climbing to the top of a ladder, and waiting until the anxiety goes away. It may take a long time the first time you use exposure - maybe 20 minutes or even longer.

By going through the feared experience and riding out the panic, the situation or trigger no longer holds such power. The next time you climb to the top of a ladder, the panic will probably be less intense and of shorter duration. After a few sessions of exposure, the panic can go away entirely, so that climbing to the top of a ladder is no longer a frightening experience

Perhaps the feared situation is panic itself. You may not notice any particular triggers for panic attacks, and your main fear is having a panic attack. The exposure in this situation is to deliberately induce a panic attack. Imagine the sensations and symptoms of panic, and encourage them - try to increase your heart rate, deliberately breathe shallowly and hyperventilate, make your muscles more tense. Induce a panic attack and then try to keep your anxiety as high as possible. The anxiety will decrease eventually no matter how hard you try to maintain it.

Make a Plan: Your Own Prescription for Dealing with Panic Attacks

Feared situations:

Things that I can do in the moment when I experience a panic attack:

Coping methods I will use regularly even when I'm not experiencing panic attacks:

When and how often I will use these coping methods (set a date):
