Health anxiety activity plan

Choose a feasible step towards something meaningful. Keep relevant healthcare advice and practical support.

Editable PDF: replace or delete the fictional examples. Blank PDF: print and write. Guidance follows.

Activity and why it matters to me

e.g. Cooking with my family; time together matters to me.

First step / smaller version

e.g. Prepare one part of the meal; start with setting the table if needed.

When, where / support / health advice

e.g. Saturday evening; keep relevant healthcare advice.

Prediction / likely obstacle

e.g. The urge to search symptoms may return.

How I will respond and adapt

e.g. Follow my care plan and return to the chosen activity.

What I did and what I noticed

e.g. Helped prepare dinner while still uncertain.

Learning / next step

e.g. I could participate; plan another manageable activity.

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Health anxiety setback plan

Keep the learning visible. Match each early sign with a practical response rather than waiting for a difficult week.

Editable PDF: replace or delete the fictional examples. Blank PDF: print and write. Guidance follows.

What I have learned

e.g. I can take part in ordinary life while uncertain.

If I notice...	A small response I can use	Support / when to review
e.g. Repeated searching takes over the evening.	e.g. Return to one activity, keeping agreed care.	e.g. Review with my therapist.

Helpful habits to keep

e.g. Meaningful activity and my agreed healthcare plan.

Support / when to ask for help

e.g. Contact my clinician about medical questions; therapist about the anxiety pattern.

Review date / reminder

e.g. Review next month or sooner if the plan stops helping.

Keep agreed medical care. A worksheet cannot assess new, severe or changing physical symptoms.

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Using this resource

Health anxiety activity plan

What this helps with

Health anxiety can take time away from relationships, work and activities, through checking or avoidance. A maintenance plan should therefore include what you want to return to, not only what you want to reduce. Choose activities consistent with your health advice and review the learning from small steps. Future health news or symptoms may bring worry back; a plan can help you distinguish using CBT skills from following medical guidance.

How to use it

1. Name one activity that health worry has restricted and why it matters to you.
2. Check relevant health advice, then choose a manageable return step and date.
3. Record what you predict, what happens and what you learn about engagement or coping.
4. List likely future triggers, early signs of repeated checking, useful CBT responses and when to seek further professional support.

A fictional worked example

Helen has stopped meeting friends because she spends evenings searching health information. Her clinician has not advised restricting social activity. She plans a short café visit and predicts that health worries will make conversation impossible. During the visit, worries appear, but she also listens and laughs. Her setback plan names health headlines as a trigger and repeated late-night searches as an early sign. She will return to agreed care, review her checking experiment and reconnect with an activity. If symptoms change, she will seek appropriate advice; if anxiety again substantially restricts life, she will contact her therapist or GP for support.

Keep in mind

Adapt activity to medical advice, disability and energy limits; this is not an instruction to push through symptoms. Keep screening and follow-up. Seek advice for new or worsening symptoms and further psychological support when anxiety limits functioning. For ages 16-17, arrange age-appropriate professional guidance.

Sources and attribution

Warwick, H. M. C., & Salkovskis, P. M. (1990). Hypochondriasis. Behaviour Research and Therapy, 28(2), 105-117.

NHS. Health anxiety. Accessed 24 October 2026.

Original material informed by the sources above. No outside organisation endorses this worksheet.

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