



When I notice I'm avoiding something

An Everyday Insight tool
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Use this when you catch yourself putting something off, staying away from something, or doing something to get away from a feeling.

Avoiding usually brings quick relief and a cost later. Walking through what happened makes the pattern easier to see, so next time you can choose something that moves you toward what matters.

If what you're avoiding brings strong fear or panic, or is tied to something traumatic, work on it with a therapist rather than on your own.

Name _____

Date _____

1 What happened?

Where you were and what was going on, or what you were putting off.

2 How did you feel?

Feelings, and anything you noticed in your body. A word or two is enough.

3 What did you do, and what did it do for you?

What you did instead. What it did for you right then, and how things went afterward.

4 What could you try instead?

Something small and specific that moves toward what you were avoiding, not away from it. You can plan it next.

Plan what you'll try instead

When _____



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What avoidance can look like

- Staying in bed or on the couch longer than you meant to
- Not answering messages or calls
- Putting off a task, a bill, or an appointment
- Saying no to plans, or canceling at the last minute
- Scrolling, TV, or games to stop thinking about something
- Going over a problem in your head instead of doing something about it
- Keeping busy with easy things so a harder one doesn't get done

Any of these can be fine now and then. It's worth a look when it keeps happening, or when it keeps you from things that matter to you.

An example

- 1 What happened?**
A friend texted to invite me to dinner on Saturday.
- 2 How did you feel?**
Tired and heavy. Worried I'd be bad company.
- 3 What did you do, and what did it do for you?**
I didn't answer and watched TV all evening. It spared me the effort and the worry that night. Afterward I felt more alone, and the text got harder to answer.
- 4 What could you try instead?**
Reply today and suggest a short coffee on Sunday instead of a whole dinner.

What to try instead

The other choice is usually small and specific, and it moves toward the thing you were avoiding. Reply with one line. Get up and open the curtains. Call for two minutes.

What happens after

One try often doesn't change much, and that's common. Try again, or try something smaller. Seeing the pattern once rarely changes it. It gets easier with practice, and a therapist can help you look at the patterns that keep coming back.

Another time

1 What happened?

2 How did you feel?

3 What did you do, and what did it do for you?

4 What could you try instead?

Plan what you'll try instead

When _____

