

First aid for

OVERTHINKING

Why do we overthink? Human beings are **naturally** inclined to seek solutions to problems. Only, overthinking does not appear to be the best method for this. This is because it **focuses** on the **problem** instead of the solution. So it does not help you move forward. Notice that you suffer from recurring negative thoughts? Then try applying the "Worry tree" below!



Letting go isn't always easy. Below are some helpful tips/techniques that can support you in this:

✓ **WRITE it down**

Writing helps you to express your worrying thoughts and to get a better grip on what you are worrying about.

E.g. Use a diary in which you can share all your worries in an inventory.

✓ **Keep an OVERTHINKING DIARY**

Keeping a diary helps you become aware of your worrying thoughts and reflect on when and where you are overthinking. You can also look back on the process you went through.

E.g. Use a diary in which you can share all your worries in an inventory.

✓ **Search for DISTRACTION**

Distract yourself by focusing your attention on something else and/or by actively doing something.

E.g. Take a walk, immerse yourself in a book, call a friend, exercise, take a shower, solve a puzzle...

✓ **Limit overthinking in TIME and SPACE**

Increase control over your overthinking by delineating it in time and space. An overthinking moment is a fixed moment (15–20 min) in the day in a fixed place that you set aside to think. Afterwards, you engage in an overthinking pause by seeking distraction.

E.g. After dinner, in a specific room and on a specific seat.

✓ **Teach yourself to RELAX**

Relaxed people overthink less. Relaxation exercises can help to give your body and mind the necessary relaxation and tranquility.

E.g. Relaxation, breathing exercises (slowing down breathing, abdominal breathing), ...

✓ **TEST your worrying thoughts**

Question your worrying thoughts and trace irrational reasoning. By testing them, you will break the cycle of overthinking and your thoughts will become more realistic. Be sure to take a look at the infographic on [automatic thoughts](#).

E.g. Is this true? does this thought help me forward? What shows that this thought is true/false?



You can think of 'dealing with overthinking' as a skill to be trained. This takes time and practice. So don't give up if you don't succeed immediately. See what helps you at what time. Try different tips/techniques. As you train these skills, they become stronger.