

Facing the things you avoid

There are three steps to this activity:

1. Make a list of social situations that you often try to escape from or avoid. For example, you could write "talking to someone I don't know" or "giving a presentation at work."
2. Give each situation a "difficulty score" out of 10. If a situation causes you no anxiety, rate it 0. If it causes extreme anxiety, rate it 10.

Try to put the situations in order, from least anxiety to most anxiety. Here's an example:

Situation	Difficulty score (0 = no anxiety, 10 = extreme anxiety)
Initiating a conversation with someone at work	5
Talking about your ideas in a meeting	7
Joining a class or hobby club	9
Eating in a public place	4

You will find a blank table below.

3. Start with the lowest-ranked item on your list to see what happens. This should be the one that causes you the least anxiety.

Although your social anxiety symptoms might feel worse at first, if you keep going they're likely to reduce. Try to stay in the situation until your anxiety has reduced.

Remember, you don't have to feel scared or self-conscious about the symptoms of social anxiety. They might feel terrible, but they aren't obvious to others, and other people aren't likely to judge you negatively because of them.

Situation	Difficulty score (0 = no anxiety, 10 = extreme anxiety)