



Taking Risks

Your anxiety is making you miss out on a lot of things in life. Taking a risk means doing everyday things that you've been avoiding.

The only way to get some of those things back in your life is to start doing them. This may sound scary to you. In fact, you may be feeling anxious just at the thought of doing risky things.

There is a way to make it easier to get back to a fuller and more enriched life. Each time you overcome an obstacle you gain strength and confidence.

- **List** some of the things you have been avoiding. Choose small everyday things such as going to a store or a movie.
- **Number** your list with #1 being the least anxiety provoking.
- **Start** with #1 on your list.
- **Break** it down into small manageable steps.
- **Begin** with the first step.
- **Hang in** there until your anxiety starts to drop.
- **Tell yourself** "Good for me. I'm teaching myself that I don't have to get so panicked about everything."
- **Repeat** daily until you can easily do the activity with little anxiety.
- **When** you have mastered one risk, pick the next from your list, and take the same steps

Remember, if you stop when your anxiety is rising you have just strengthened your anxiety and made it harder to repeat the activity. By waiting until your anxiety begins to drop, you learn that what you feared and avoided is not so dangerous.

Continue until you put anxiety in its place and take back your life.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Example: Kelly begins by making a list of everyday things she's been avoiding. She then numbers the list from the least to the most anxiety provoking. She begins with #1: Going to the bank, and breaks it down into small steps, which she works her way through. When her anxiety has sufficiently decreased, she proceeds to #2 on her list.

List	Number
• Grocery shopping	4
• Going to a movie	3
• Coffee with a friend	5
• Going to the bank	1
• Taking a bus	6
• Going to a mall	2

Breakdown #1 (going to the bank)

- Organize paperwork
- Prepare to go out
- Walk to bank
- Spend time outside bank
- Spend time inside bank
- Line up for teller
- Transaction with teller

Steps

- Begin with first step (organize paperwork)
- Hang in until anxiety begins to decrease
- Congratulate your effort
- Repeat (organizing paperwork) as necessary until anxiety is minimal
- Move on to next step (prepare to go out)
- Repeat each step until activity (going to the bank) causes little anxiety
- Repeat this procedure with #2 (going to a mall)