

# Wellbeing Focus

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## Worry Management Learn how to worry less

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We all worry about things from time to time and some level of worry is normal. Worrying can even be helpful as it encourages us to take action to resolve any problems in our lives. However, it can become a problem when we worry too much or when we worry about things outside of our control.

### The cycle of worry

When we worry too much or worry about things outside of our control, it can become a vicious cycle. The more we worry about things, the more anxious we feel and the more anxious we feel, the more we worry.

### Types of worry

Worries tend to fall under one of two categories – hypothetical or practical.

**Hypothetical worries** - This type of worry often focuses on situations that may or may not happen, or on things that are outside of our control. Sometimes they may be related to things that have happened in the past that we cannot change. Often worries about things that might happen in the future begin with “what if...”, for example “what if there is an accident on my way to work and I’m late for my meeting?”. Although these situations could happen in the future, there is little evidence to suggest that they will and there is nothing that we can do about them right now.

**Practical worries** - These worries are related to problems that are affecting us in the present and that have a practical solution, for example “my car has broken down and I need to get to work” or “I’m struggling with my workload but I’m not sure how to speak to my manager about this”.

### How do I manage hypothetical worries?

‘Worry time’ is a tool used in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) which aims to help you regain control over your anxiety and worrying by reducing the amount of time you spend thinking about hypothetical worries. You can also use this technique for practical worries that do not need to be solved until later.

**Step 1: Schedule a worry time** - Allocate yourself a time each day to think or worry about your hypothetical worries. This needs to be a time when you know that you will not be disturbed so that you can focus on your worries. 20 minutes tends to be a suitable amount of time, but you may find that you need slightly more or less time once you have start practising this. You can have your worry time at any time of day, although it is best not to do it too close to going to bed. Ideally, you would plan your worry time a week in advance.



**Step 2: Write your worries down** - As you notice worries coming into your head during the day, write them down and consider whether each one is a hypothetical or a practical worry. If it is a hypothetical worry, or a practical worry that does not need to be resolved until later, write it down and move onto step 3. If it is a practical worry that needs to be dealt with now, you may find the information on problem solving helpful.

**Step 3: Refocus your attention** - Once you have written down the worry, refocus your attention on the present. You could try to go back to the task you were doing before the worry popped into your head or you might find it helpful to do something else as a distraction. It is normal for the worry to come back into your head several times. Each time this happens you should remind yourself that you will come back to the worry in your worry time and refocus your attention onto something else.

**Step 4: Worry time** - During your worry time, read through the worries that you have written down throughout the day and allow yourself to worry about them. If you had written down any practical worries that did not need to be dealt with until later, you can also spend this time using problem solving to come up with a plan to resolve these issues.

**Step 5: Refocus your attention** - After your worry time has ended, throw your list of worries away and try to focus your attention on something else. Any worries that come into your head after your worry time has ended should be written on a new list for your next worry time.

### How do I manage practical worries?

Problem solving is a tool used in CBT which aims to help you resolve practical problems using a logical, step by step approach.

**Step 1: Identify the problem** - Try to define the practical worry as a problem that can be solved. For example, reframe “what if I lose my job because I can’t keep up with my work?” as “I’m struggling with my work and need to find a way to speak to my manager”.

**Step 2: Consider solutions** - Write down as many different solutions as you can, including ones that seem a bit ridiculous! Consider the pros and cons of each solution.

**Step 3: Make a plan** - Choose the solution you wish to implement and plan how you are going to do this. Try to make your plan as specific as possible, for example, when are you going to implement this?

**Step 4: Carry out your plan** - Implement the plan that you came up with.

**Step 5: Review** - Reflect on how your plan went. Is the problem resolved? If not, go back to your list of solutions and re-consider your plan. Did you learn anything that may help you next time in a similar situation?

Remember that learning to manage your worries differently will take time and practice. You can find more information about the techniques, including helpful worksheets, at:

[https://cedar.exeter.ac.uk/media/universityofexeter/schoolofpsychology/cedar/documents/liapt/Managing\\_Your\\_Worries.pdf](https://cedar.exeter.ac.uk/media/universityofexeter/schoolofpsychology/cedar/documents/liapt/Managing_Your_Worries.pdf).

## Mince Pies with Orange

These Christmassy bites have delicious orangey pastry and grated marzipan on top that gives a wonderful flavour.

### Ingredients

#### For the pastry

- 175g/6oz plain flour
- 75g/2½oz cold butter, cubed
- 25g/1oz icing sugar, plus extra for dusting
- 1 large orange, grated zest only
- 1 free-range egg, beaten

#### For the filling

- 250g/9oz good quality ready made mincemeat
- 100g/3½oz ready to eat dried apricots, finely chopped (do this in a food processor if you're short on time)
- 125g/4oz uncoloured marzipan, grated

#### Equipment and preparation

For this recipe you will need a 12 hole muffin tin and 8cm/3in fluted pastry cutter.

 **Preparation:**  
Less than 30 minutes  
**Cooking Time:**  
10 to 30 minutes

 **Serves 12**

 **Easy**

 **V**

### Method

1. Preheat the oven to 200C/180C Fan/Gas 6 and place a baking sheet inside to heat up.
2. For the pastry, either pulse the flour and butter in a food processor until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs, or rub the flour and butter together in a large bowl using your fingertips.
3. Stir in the icing sugar and orange zest, then stir in the beaten egg and mix until the ingredients just come together as a dough. Wrap the dough in greaseproof paper and chill in the fridge for 10-15 minutes, or until firm.
4. When the pastry has rested, unwrap it. Place the greaseproof paper on a work surface and lightly dust with icing sugar. Place the dough on top, dust with icing sugar, then cover with another sheet of greaseproof paper. Roll the pastry between the sheets of greaseproof paper to a thickness of 1-2mm. (If you are confident rolling out pastry you do not need to use the greaseproof paper, but it does help prevent the pastry tearing if the dough is a little sticky).
5. Stamp 12 rounds from the pastry using a 8cm/3in fluted pastry cutter. (Any leftover pastry can be frozen and used to make jam tarts.) Line each hole of the muffin tin with one of the pastry rounds and prick the base of each with a fork.
6. For the filling, mix the mincemeat with the chopped apricots until well combined. Divide the mixture equally among the pastry cases. Top each tart with some of the grated marzipan.
7. Slide the muffin tin onto the hot baking sheet and bake in the oven for 12-15 minutes, or until golden-brown and crisp. Dust with icing sugar and serve warm.

Recipe from Good Food Mary Berry's Absolute Favourites