
How to Do Therapy

In each session, you will be given instructions on what to do in your therapy time every day for that week. Those instructions will be summarized in the “*What to Do This Week*” handouts. In general you will be doing the following:

- Spend a full week on each session. Follow the therapy sessions in order. Do not skip around, especially not for your first time through the full program. (Session 1 is an introduction – you do not necessarily need to spend a full week on session 1.)

Note: It is important to spend a full week on each session so that your brain has time to accept therapy strategies in the right way. Some weeks you may find yourself spending an extra few days on a session if you feel you need more reinforcement.

Warning: Avoid the tendency to stay on a session too long (such as 2 or 3 weeks on the same session) due to a feeling that you haven’t “mastered” a certain therapy strategy. This is a mistake. We never “master” therapy in a single week, and we should never expect that of ourselves. Staying on one session too long risks stalling your progress. Use the momentum of going to a new session each week in your favor. This momentum and progress will keep you more motivated.

- **The “first day” of your therapy week:** listen to the audio recording for that session. These audio recordings are the same sessions, and presented in the same order, that Dr. Richards would discuss in therapy group meetings and in 1-1 appointment settings.

Tip: On average, each of these audio recordings is an hour long. For that reason, you might consider starting your “therapy week” on the weekend, or your regular day off, so that you have a little more time to listen to the entire audio.



The audio will explain the topics and handouts for that week. *You can listen to the audio again if you feel you did not understand everything.* If you understand the material presented in the audio, you do not need to listen to the audio every day.



➤ **The next “6 days of your therapy week”:** spend about 30 minutes every day reviewing the main handouts for that session. Read the handouts for that session slowly, calmly, and **out loud** to yourself. Any additional instructions for your daily 30 minutes will be noted in the “*What to Do This Week*” handout for that session.

Note: This daily 30-minute study time is the **most important** part of your therapy. Listening to the audio recording entirely at least once is the first step, but your

30-minute practice time every day for the rest of the therapy week is most essential part of your therapy.

➤ Some sessions have additional resources and supplemental handouts. Review all of these resources at least once. You may choose to continue reviewing these resources if they help you. You may find that you do not need to review these resources as frequently, as some of these resources are informational in nature, and not intended as daily therapy handouts.

Reminder: The heart of the therapy is the audio recording and the main handouts. You should always listen to the audio recording fully, at least once, for your therapy week. And, you should review the main handouts for that session daily during your 30-minute therapy time.

Now you know how to do therapy.

Doing therapy is not difficult. Anyone can do therapy, and YOU can do therapy. What might be difficult is simply keeping up with a new daily habit. Any new habit, be it going to the gym or learning a new language, requires some commitment of consistent effort and time on your part. Therapy requires this same *daily effort*.

As long as you are doing the therapy – listening to the audio for that week AND reviewing the handouts for about 30 minutes every day – you may organize how and when you do the therapy according to your own study preferences and schedule. There is no one right way to “do therapy”.

Here are some additional tips for you to consider when doing your therapy:

- We have found that doing therapy in the morning, at the start of the day, might be more helpful for some people. People are generally more refreshed in the morning, before the regular stresses of the day have had a chance to wear us out. A calmer mood also boosts the effects of therapy. When we start the day with therapy, it has a way of carrying forward throughout the day, affecting our life in a positive way.



You may not always have time in the morning, and you may sometimes change the time of your 30 minutes. But try doing your therapy in the morning and see if it makes a difference for you.

- To learn/study anything more effectively, an **active focus** is better than a passive focus. To encourage this, block out other distractions during your therapy time.

If possible, have a quiet room to go to, where you can close the door behind you. This allows you the privacy of working on your therapy alone so that you are more focused and more comfortable while reading the therapy out loud.

- As you progress with therapy and become familiar with what you need to do each day, you may adjust how and when you do therapy. You may **customize the therapy** phrases to suit your situation and your life. Customizing the therapy in a healthy, personal, and rational way is a good thing.

Remember: We’re all human. We all have good days and bad. Some days won’t be successful therapy days. You may miss a day here or there. Don’t let that get you down. Just show up and do the best you can. Review your handouts for 30 minutes a day. Be patient. This is the best advice we can give you. If you stick with the therapy by calming down and slowing down, you will see major progress against panic in your life.