Homewood Health | Santé

Postponing Your Worries

When you are consumed with a worry, **postponing your worry** is an approach that can be helpful. Instead of worrying throughout the day, this approach involves postponing your worry to a "**worry period**." The worry period takes place at the same time, same place and is for the same duration every day. For example, you may choose 15 minutes, right after dinner, in your living room to be your "worry period." It will take some time to benefit from using a "worry period" and starting with smaller worries will help you learn the skills you need before moving on to bigger worries. Follow these steps to help you develop your skills of postponing your worries.

1. As soon as you are aware that you've begun to worry, postpone worrying about it to your pre-determined worry period.
2. Jot down the worry and any accompanying triggers (e.g., place, time of day, events) so you can refer back to these later during your worry period.
3. Shift your focus back to the present by using mindfulness techniques. Mindfulness will help you let go of the worry until your "worry period." Take a moment to decide what's the most important thing you can do for yourself. Do something that's positive (e.g., read a book), involves self-care (e.g., do a guided yoga session or go for a walk and pay attention to your surroundings) or is practical (e.g., look at your to-do list and work on the next item).
4. When your pre-determined "worry period" arrives, use that time to problem-solve your worry or for thought diary work. Only focus on the worries from your day that are still bothering you.
5. Finish the worksheet and note what you learned during the process.

What's the worry? Note any triggers linked to your worry.	**Were you successful in postponing your worry?** Note strategies used to distract yourself or cope.	**What did you do in the worry period? Did you still need to worry?** Note if you used mindfulness, a thought diary, or problem solving. Note if those techniques worked.	**What did you learn from postponing your worry?** Was the worry still a worry? More or less worrisome? Were you able to control your worry? When the worry period was over, how did you feel?