

GYM ANXIETY TOOLKIT

PRINT + BRING

A simple system to overcome anxiety and get a workout done

Read the whole thing once at home, then bring it and use only the section you need.

60-SECOND RESET

Run this when anxiety spikes

Do this before you walk in:

- **Name your plan.** Say it out loud: "Today I'm doing: squat, push, pull, leave." Your brain needs a map.
- **Breathe with a longer exhale.** 3–5 slow breaths. Inhale 4 seconds, exhale 6–8.
- **Pick your first anchor.** What's the first thing you'll do on the floor? Decide now, not when you're anxious.

When you walk in, do this in order:

- Safe first stop: treadmill, bike, or elliptical.
- Move easy for 2 minutes.
- Set a 10-minute timer.
- Say: "My only job is 10 minutes."

Tip: keep headphones off for 2 mins. Let your brain settle.

After 10 minutes, choose one:

- A: Continue into your normal plan (simple).
- B: Machines-only circuit (below).
- C: Leave on purpose. With a win.

FALLBACK LADDER (A/B/C)

Full / Short / Show-up

Plan A (light anxiety): run your normal program as usual.

Plan B (moderate anxiety): machines-only (2 sets

x 8-12 reps each exercise)

- Leg press
- Chest press
- Seated row OR lat pulldown

Rule: smooth reps. Stop with 2 reps in the tank.

Plan C (high anxiety): 10-20 minutes easy cardio, then leave.

3-VISIT RAMP

Ease in, build evidence

Anchor zones: Cardio (start) + Machines (main).

- **Visit 1 (15-20 mins):** Plan C + learn the layout.

Leave.

- **Visit 2 (20-30 mins):** 10-min timer + 1-2 machines (Plan B lite). Leave.

- **Visit 3 (25-35 mins):** 10-min timer + Plan B. Leave.

Leaving while it's easy is how you come back.

IF-THEN RULES

Examples to copy, then personalize

Pick 2 rules for your common derailments:

- If the gym feels too crowded then I do Plan B
- If I feel panicky, then I do 10 minutes cardio, then decide.
- If I feel lost, then I ask ONE question ("Where is the chest press?").
- If I only have 20 minutes, then I do Plan B and leave satisfied.
- If someone is using the machine I need, then I skip to the next scheduled exercise.

Tip: keep each rule short and specific.

IN-THE-MOMENT ANXIETY REDUCTION STRATEGIES

Calm down, then act

90-second rescue:

1. Stop the exercise.
2. Change environment (bathroom, lobby, water).
3. Grounding exercise: name 3 things you see, 3 sounds you hear, move 3 body parts.
4. Lower stimulation (headphones, face away from mirrors).
5. Micro-goal: "I'll stay 2 minutes, then decide."

Default move: return to your cardio anchor and restart the 10-minute timer.

**You don't beat gym anxiety with confidence.
You beat it with a fallback plan.**