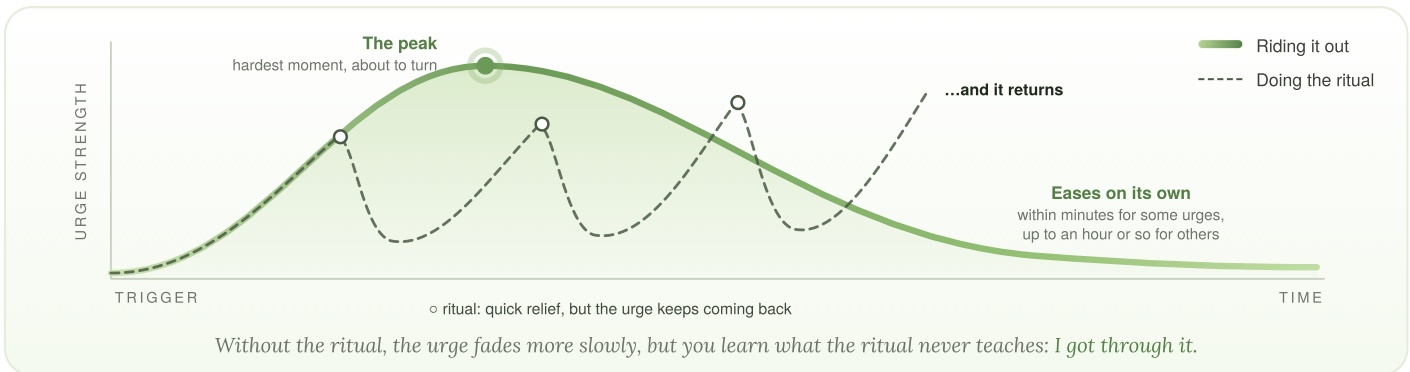


Riding Out the Urge

An in-the-moment guide for resisting compulsions

An urge to check, wash, ask or repeat can feel like an emergency, but urges behave like waves: they build, crest and ease on their own. Each wave you ride without the ritual teaches your brain that you can cope, and that the ritual isn't what keeps you safe.



In the Moment *Four steps for riding the wave*

1 NOTICE & NAME

"This is an urge to check. It's OCD, not an emergency."
Naming it creates a small gap.

2 PAUSE

Set a short timer, even 2–5 minutes, and stay where you are. You're not promising "never", just "not right now".

3 RIDE THE WAVE

Get curious about where it sits in your body. Rate it 0–10 and watch it change. Let it rise; don't push it away.

4 CARRY ON

Return to what you were doing, even with the urge still there. Life doesn't need to wait for certainty.

Answering the Urge *Acknowledge what's true, then add the fuller picture*

WHAT THE URGE SAYS	A MORE BALANCED RESPONSE
"Do it now, or something bad will happen."	This feeling is strong and genuinely convincing. But urgency is a feeling, not evidence . I've felt this before, and the feared outcome didn't depend on the ritual.
"You can't stand this feeling."	It really is uncomfortable, and I'd rather not feel it. But uncomfortable isn't the same as unbearable , and I've stayed with hard feelings until they eased before.
"Just once won't hurt."	One ritual would bring relief, which is exactly why it's tempting. But relief teaches my brain the ritual was needed , so the urge keeps coming back.
"But what if this time is different?"	I can't be 100% sure, and no ritual has ever given me that. Living with some doubt is the skill I'm building , one urge at a time.

HELPS YOU RIDE IT

- ✓ Naming the urge, out loud or silently
- ✓ Breathing at a normal, steady pace, not to escape the feeling
- ✓ Staying in the situation rather than leaving it
- ✓ Remembering why this matters: the life OCD is taking time from

KEEPS THE CYCLE GOING

- ✗ Doing the ritual "just this once", or a quicker, partial version
- ✗ Seeking reassurance from others, or from online searching
- ✗ Mental rituals: reviewing, counting or praying it away
- ✗ Avoiding the trigger so the urge never has to be faced

If the ritual happens anyway

It's a slip, not a failure. Skip the self-criticism and notice what tipped the balance. When you're ready, return to the trigger and practise again; a therapist may guide you to re-expose deliberately.

Track this wave

Urge strength, 0 (none) to 10 (strongest)

START

_____/10

PEAK

_____/10

10 MIN

_____/10

30 MIN

_____/10

What did I learn? _____

You don't need to make the urge go away. Let it be there, without letting it decide.

BEST PRACTISED ALONGSIDE ERP WITH A QUALIFIED THERAPIST

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