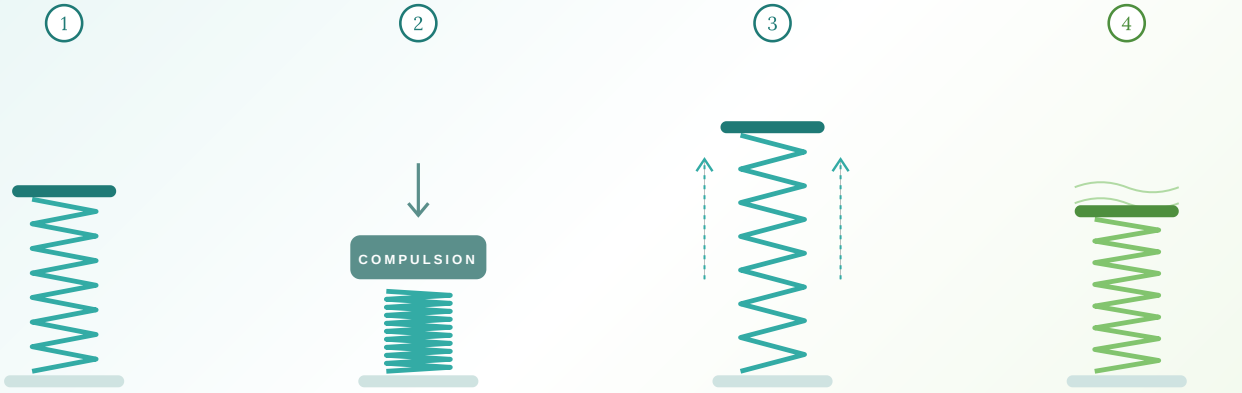
The Compulsions Checklist

OCD · ANXIETY · CERTAINTY

Most people have routines and check things now and then. This checklist helps you notice habits that have become hard to stop, take up a lot of time, or cause distress. It is not a diagnosis.



The urge rises
an intrusive thought brings anxiety or discomfort

A compulsion pushes it down
relief comes quickly

It springs back
often stronger, so the cycle repeats

Responding differently

With supported practice, you can learn to respond differently to urges, even when they remain uncomfortable.

01 What is a compulsion?

Definition

A repeated action or thought, often driven by distress or a rigid rule. It may be intended to prevent a feared outcome, even when it is excessive or not realistically connected to that outcome.

Based on American Psychiatric Association (2022).

Not always visible

Some compulsions happen in the mind, such as going over events or repeating phrases. Seeking reassurance and avoiding things can work in a similar way.

02 When it may be a concern

Worth talking about if it...

takes up a lot of time (for example, more than an hour a day), causes distress, feels very hard to resist, or gets in the way of work, study, relationships or daily life.

Help is available

OCD is treatable. Cognitive behavioural therapy that includes exposure and response prevention (ERP) is a recommended treatment (NICE, 2005).

HOW TO USE IT

1. Read each section
2. Tick now or past
3. Rate the impact
4. Describe the main ones
5. Notice patterns

A note of care. Please don't try to stop all compulsions at once; change usually happens gradually, with support. If you need support, please reach out to someone you trust or a health professional.

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03 The checklist

Tick **now** if it applies at the moment, or **past** if it applied before. Leave blank anything that doesn't apply, and use the empty lines for anything not listed.

Washing and cleaning	NOW	PAST
Washing hands in a set way, or for a long time	☐	☐
Long or ritualised showering, bathing or grooming	☐	☐
Cleaning objects or surfaces more than is needed	☐	☐
_____	☐	☐
_____	☐	☐

Checking	NOW	PAST
Locks, switches, appliances, windows or taps	☐	☐
That I have not harmed, or will not harm, someone	☐	☐
That I have not made a mistake or said something wrong	☐	☐
_____	☐	☐
_____	☐	☐

Repeating	NOW	PAST
Re-reading or re-writing things	☐	☐
Repeating everyday actions, such as going through a doorway	☐	☐
Repeating something until it feels "right"	☐	☐
_____	☐	☐
_____	☐	☐

Counting	NOW	PAST
Counting objects, steps or actions	☐	☐
Needing to do things a certain number of times	☐	☐
_____	☐	☐
_____	☐	☐
_____	☐	☐

Ordering and arranging	NOW	PAST
Arranging things until they look or feel exactly right	☐	☐
Needing things to be even, symmetrical or in a set order	☐	☐
_____	☐	☐
_____	☐	☐
_____	☐	☐

Mental compulsions	NOW	PAST
Going over past events in my mind for reassurance	☐	☐
Replacing a thought with a "safe" thought, image or phrase	☐	☐
Saying words, prayers or phrases in a particular way	☐	☐
_____	☐	☐
_____	☐	☐

Reassurance and confessing	NOW	PAST
Asking others to confirm that things are okay	☐	☐
Feeling I must tell someone, or confess, to feel settled	☐	☐
Searching online to feel certain	☐	☐
_____	☐	☐
_____	☐	☐

Touching, tapping and other	NOW	PAST
Needing to touch, tap or rub things in a particular way	☐	☐
Avoiding places, people or objects linked to my fears	☐	☐
_____	☐	☐
_____	☐	☐
_____	☐	☐

04 Also worth noting

Things I avoid because of my fears

places, objects, people, activities, words or numbers

_____

_____

_____

Other repeated habits I'm unsure about

not every habit is a compulsion; note anything you're unsure of

_____

_____

_____

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05 The impact over the past week

How much time do compulsions take each day?

○ none ○ less than 1 hour ○ 1–3 hours ○ 3–8 hours ○ more than 8 hours

How distressed would I feel if I couldn't do them?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

How much do they get in the way of daily life?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

How hard is it to resist them?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

0 = not at all · 10 = extremely

06 My main compulsions

THE COMPULSION	WHAT TENDS TO TRIGGER IT	WHAT I FEAR WILL HAPPEN IF I DON'T	TIME PER DAY

07 Noticing the pattern

When are compulsions most and least likely?
times, places, people, stress, tiredness

What happens to the urge if I wait a little?
only if this feels manageable; there is no need to force it

What would I most like to be different?

Notes or questions I want to remember

SOURCES

American Psychiatric Association. (2022). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (5th ed., text rev.).

Goodman, W. K., Price, L. H., Rasmussen, S. A., Mazure, C., Fleischmann, R. L., Hill, C. L., Heninger, G. R., & Charney, D. S. (1989). The Yale-Brown Obsessive Compulsive Scale: I. Development, use, and reliability. *Archives of General Psychiatry, 46*(11), 1006–1011.

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence. (2005). *Obsessive-compulsive disorder and body dysmorphic disorder: Treatment* (Clinical guideline CG31).

The categories reflect those commonly used in clinical assessment (e.g., Goodman et al., 1989). The wording is B&F's own, and this checklist is not a validated measure.

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