



Exposure Ladder Worksheet

Design small, manageable steps to gently face avoided situations.

This worksheet helps you turn a big, overwhelming fear into a series of smaller, do-able steps. Exposure here is not about forcing yourself — it's about **gradual learning**, at your pace.

QUICK INSTRUCTIONS

- Choose **one situation** you've been avoiding (place, activity, or sensation).
- Break it into **5–10 small steps**, from easiest at the bottom to hardest at the top.
- Each step should feel challenging enough to learn from, but not overwhelming.
- Move up only when the current step feels a bit easier or more familiar.
- Use your toolkit during each step: softening, floating, slow exhale, gentle self-talk.

Think of this as creating a map. You're not leaping to the top — you're taking one small step at a time.

MY EXPOSURE LADDER

Start with Step 1 as the **easiest** step and build toward Step 10 as the **most challenging**. You don't have to use all 10.

Step 1 — Easiest

START HERE

Situation (what I'll do):

Why this step feels hard (one sentence):

Sensations I expect:

Support tools I'll use (e.g., floating, slow exhale):

Difficulty rating: (0–10)

Notes after attempt:

Step 2

NEXT

Situation:

Why this step feels hard:

Sensations I expect:

Support tools I'll use:

Difficulty rating: (0–10)

Notes after attempt:

Step 3

STEADY

Situation:

Why this step feels hard:

Sensations I expect:

Support tools I'll use:

Difficulty rating: (0–10)

Notes after attempt:

Step 4

GROWING

Situation:

Why this step feels hard:

Sensations I expect:

Support tools I'll use:

Difficulty rating: (0-10)

Notes after attempt:

Step 5

MIDDLE

Situation:

Why this step feels hard:

Sensations I expect:

Support tools I'll use:

Difficulty rating: (0-10)

Notes after attempt:

Step 6

UPPER

Situation:

Why this step feels hard:

Sensations I expect:

Support tools I'll use:

Difficulty rating: (0-10)

Notes after attempt:

Step 7

STRETCH

Situation:

Why this step feels hard:

Sensations I expect:

Support tools I'll use:

Difficulty rating: (0-10)

Notes after attempt:

Step 8

BIG STEP

Situation:

Why this step feels hard:

Sensations I expect:

Support tools I'll use:

Difficulty rating: (0-10)

Notes after attempt:

Step 9

ALMOST THERE

Situation:

Why this step feels hard:

Sensations I expect:

Support tools I'll use:

Difficulty rating: (0-10)

Notes after attempt:

Step 10 — Most challenging

TOP OF LADDER

Situation (my top step):

Why this step feels hard:

Sensations I expect:

Support tools I'll use:

Difficulty rating: (0–10)

Notes after attempt:

MINI COACHING NOTES

- **Discomfort is not danger.** The goal is to feel and stay with sensations, not avoid them.
- Move up the ladder only when a step feels a bit easier, not because you “should.”
- Small but consistent steps create the strongest change over time.
- Floating and allowing turn fear into learning — you don't have to fight sensations.
- Take breaks between steps. This is a practice, not a race.

Exposure is about **graduated learning**, not proving bravery. You are allowed to go slowly and kindly.