

Fear of Flying

Cheat Sheet



Nine moves for nervous flyers, matched to the moment you need them: before you pack, up in the air, and in the minutes when fear spikes.

PHASE 1 • BEFORE THE TRIP

Booking to boarding

Most of a calm flight is arranged on the ground.



LEAST MOTION HERE

Pick a seat that helps

Over the wing sits closest to the plane's center of gravity, so you feel the least motion. An aisle seat trades the view for freedom to get up, which reads as control.

Tell a flight attendant

A quiet "I'm a nervous flyer" at boarding is plenty. Crews have heard it thousands of times, will check on you mid-flight, and can explain any sound you ask about.

Skip the scary feed

No aviation news or incident clips the week before. Your brain files everything you watch as evidence about your flight. Feed it packing lists and playlists instead.

PHASE 2 • IN THE AIR

Takeoff and cruise

Almost every scary sound has a boring explanation.



Know the sounds script

Engines drop in pitch after takeoff because pilots reduce power on purpose. The thump is the landing gear tucking away. Chimes are crew talking to crew, never alarms.

The turbulence truth

Bumps are uncomfortable, not dangerous. Airliners are built to take far more than turbulence ever delivers, and pilots change altitude for comfort, not for safety.

Give your body a job

Exhale longer than you inhale, slow and quiet. Ask for a cold drink and hold the can. Count anything: rows, clouds, sips. Busy senses leave less room for what-ifs.

PHASE 3 • WHEN FEAR SPIKES

The spiral moments

For the minutes when your mind starts writing headlines.



Name what is happening

Your alarm system cannot tell altitude from danger. It feels a shudder, notices you cannot leave, and pulls the same lever it would for a real threat. Loud, not true.

Ground through your senses

Find 5 things you can see and 4 you can touch: seat fabric, the cool window, your seatbelt buckle, your own hands. Senses live in the present. Fear lives in the forecast.

Ride the wave

Fear rises in waves that peak within a few minutes, then fall on their own. You do not have to stop the wave, only outlast the peak. It passes faster than it feels.

PERSPECTIVE

The riskiest part of your trip is the drive to the airport. Once you board, you are in the safest vehicle you will use all year.

TURBULENCE RECORD

Turbulence does not bring modern airliners down. The rare injuries it causes almost always involve someone out of their seat, unbelted.

BUILT FOR IT

Airliners carry backups for their backups, and either engine alone can keep the plane flying. Crews train for problems most pilots never meet.