

# Health Anxiety *Cheat Sheet*

When every twinge gets a background check, the checking itself becomes the problem.  
One loop to recognize, five rules that quietly starve it.

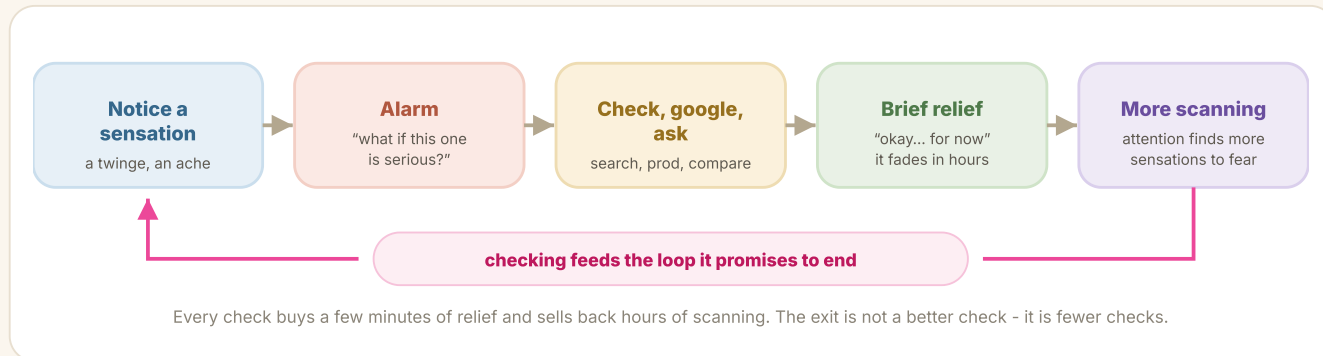


## 1 SPOT THE LOOP

## 2 FIND THE RULE IT BREAKS

## 3 FOLLOW THAT RULE ONCE, TODAY

**THE LOOP** why checking never settles it



**THE RULES** five ways to stop feeding it

### RULE 1 · SEARCHING

#### The googling rule

A symptom gets **one search maximum**, from one reputable source, then the tab closes. Dr. Google always finds cancer because the worst cases get written about most - nobody posts about the headache that was just a headache.

**IN PRACTICE** One trusted medical site, five minutes, tab closed. No forums.

### RULE 2 · REASSURANCE

#### The reassurance budget

Asking "is this normal?" works **once**. By the tenth ask the answer stops landing and the asking itself becomes the habit your alarm relies on. Spend one ask, then let the answer stay the answer.

**SAY IT** "I already asked. Asking again feeds the worry, not me."

### RULE 3 · ATTENTION

#### The body-scan paradox

Scanning **for** symptoms creates sensations to find - attention amplifies whatever it lands on. Anxiety itself adds a racing heart, tight chest, and dizziness: real feelings, freshly made, waiting to be scanned next.

**IN PRACTICE** Catch a scan starting? Move attention outward: sounds, hands, the room.

### RULE 4 · CARE

#### The one-doctor deal

**One trusted doctor**, a check-up rhythm you agree on together, and a deal: a new symptom gets one appointment, not five opinions. Between visits the question stays closed, because a professional closed it.

**SAY IT** "This has an owner and a date. It is handled until then."

### RULE 5 · POSTPONE

#### The postpone trick

The worry gets an appointment too. Note it in one line - "chest twinge, Tuesday" - and review the list at **one set time each week**. Most entries look smaller by review day; anything that has genuinely changed or persisted has earned its one appointment (see Rule 4).



### BEFORE YOU FOLD THIS UP

Health anxiety is not weakness or hypochondria-as-a-punchline. It is **caring about your life, turned up too loud**. The goal was never to stop caring - it is right-sized caring: alert enough to see a doctor when something truly changes, calm enough to live your life between check-ups.