

Phone Call *Anxiety Cheat Sheet*

A two-minute prep routine, an opening line that survives any brain state, and a five-rung ladder that makes calls boring for good.


1 PREP THREE BULLETS, NOT AN ESSAY
2 OPEN WITH THE FORMULA
3 CLIMB ONE RUNG A DAY

Why a call feels scarier than a text

IT'S NOT YOU, IT'S THE MEDIUM

NO EDIT BUTTON

A text gets rewritten five times. On a call, every word ships live.

NO TONE MARKERS

No emoji, no softeners. Your voice has to carry all the tone alone.

SILENCE YOU CAN'T SEE

You can't see why they paused, so your brain captions it as judgment.

3 min

THE CALL

vs

3 hrs

THE DREAD

The average dreaded call is over in about three minutes. The dread before it can run three hours. You are trading three minutes of awkward for an afternoon of knots.

1 Before the call

THREE MOVES, TWO MINUTES OF PREP

Write a 3-bullet script

- **Goal:** what you need from this call
- **Key info:** account number, dates, names
- **One question:** the thing you'd forget

Never a word-for-word essay - you'll read it in a robot voice and panic when they go off your page. Bullets flex; essays shatter.

Write the first sentence verbatim

The opening is the whole scary part. Script it word for word and the hardest three seconds are done before you dial.

Momentum handles the rest.

Stand up. Walk if you can.

Pace the room while you talk. Motion burns off the jitter that would otherwise sit in your voice, and standing opens your chest so you sound steadier than you feel.

2 During the call

THREE THINGS TO HOLD ON TO

The opening formula

"Hi, this is ___, I'm calling about ___."

That's it. It survives any brain state, fits every call you will ever make, and buys your nervous system five seconds to settle.

Silence is not judgment

A pause on a call feels three times longer than it is. **They're just typing** - looking you up, finding the answer. Let the quiet be quiet.

Stumbled? Restart.

"Sorry, let me start over."

Completely normal phone behavior. Everyone does it, nobody remembers it, and it beats wrestling a sentence that got away from you.

3 The ladder

EXPOSURE, ONE EASY RUNG AT A TIME

RUNG 1

Leave yourself a voicemail
zero stakes



RUNG 2

Call an automated line
check a balance



RUNG 3

Order a pizza
ends in pizza



RUNG 4

Book an appointment
real back-and-forth



RUNG 5

The call you're putting off
you've done four

One rung per day. Repeat a rung until it feels boring, then climb. Boredom is the finish line - it means your brain has refiled calls under "routine" instead of "threat".

4 The 15-second voicemail script

NAME • NUMBER SLOWLY • REASON • NUMBER AGAIN

NAME *"Hi, this is Maya Torres."* **NUMBER, SLOWLY** *"My number is 555... 01... 94."* **ONE-LINE REASON** *"I'm calling about the appointment on Thursday."* **NUMBER AGAIN** *"Again, that's Maya at 555-0194. Thanks!"*

Fifteen seconds, done. Saying the number twice, slowly, is the whole trick - they never have to replay you. Hang up and exhale.

