Rumination Check

When my mind goes round and round, I check if it is helping, then switch or shift.

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

1 Spot the loop

Rumination is repetitive thinking that goes over the same ground

Notice	→	Name it	→	Check it
I keep replaying the same thing.		This is a loop, not a plan.		Is this thinking helping me?

2 Is it helping?

Answer honestly after about 10 minutes of thinking

Am I closer to solving the problem or making a decision?	Yes ☐	No ☐	Unsure
Do I understand it better than I did 10 minutes ago?	Yes ☐	No ☐	Unsure
Do I feel better, or worse, than when I started?	Yes ☐	No ☐	Unsure

Mostly No? It is probably a loop. Switch to how (box 3) or shift your attention (box 4).

3 Switch from why to how

Swap vague why questions for concrete how questions

Why loop (abstract)	How step (concrete)
Why does this always happen to me? Why am I like this? What does this say about me? Mine: _____	What exactly happened, step by step? How did it unfold, and what helped? What is one thing I can do next? My how question: _____

4 Shift my attention

Pick something absorbing that uses my hands, body or full focus

☐ Walk or move	☐ Call or text someone	☐ Cook or clean
☐ A game or puzzle	☐ Music I can sing to	☐ A task with steps
☐ Notice 5 things I see	☐ Hobby or craft	☐ My own idea:

5 My next step

Turn the loop into one small, doable action

The thing I keep going over: _____

One concrete step I can take: _____

When: _____ **Mood now (0 to 10):** _____

My if then plan for my usual loop time

If I catch a loop (time, place or trigger): _____

then I will (a how question or an absorbing activity): _____

Someone I can talk to if it keeps coming back: _____

_____

_____

Original layout by Lotus & Tulip, based on research on rumination (Nolen-Hoeksema; Watkins). Not therapy.

Rumination Log and Weekly Review

Fill one row each time you catch a loop. After a week, look for your triggers.

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

1 My rumination log

Mood: 0 = very low, 10 = very good

Day	Trigger or topic	Minutes	Why or how?	What I did instead	Mood before	Mood after
Mon			☐ Why ☐ How			
Tue			☐ Why ☐ How			
Wed			☐ Why ☐ How			
Thu			☐ Why ☐ How			
Fri			☐ Why ☐ How			
Sat			☐ Why ☐ How			
Sun			☐ Why ☐ How			

2 Week review

What did this week show me?

Loops caught this week: _____ **Most common trigger:** _____

Times of day it hits most: _____ **Shift that worked best:** _____

What I noticed: _____

Next week I will try: ☐ Catch it sooner ☐ More how steps ☐ Plan for my trigger time ☐ Ask for support

My plan: _____

For therapists and counselors

1. Thinking about problems is not the problem. The target is unproductive, repetitive, abstract dwelling that makes mood worse.
2. Use the three helping questions to tell useful reflection from a loop. Clients often believe rumination will bring insight.
3. Practice switching from why to how in session with a recent example, then assign it with this log for one week.
4. In the log review, look for triggers and times of day. Plan an absorbing activity or a how step for those moments.
5. Rumination is linked with longer and more frequent depression. Screen mood and step up care when symptoms are moderate or severe.
6. This sheet is one tool, not a full treatment. Rumination-focused CBT has its own protocol and training.

Safety first: if thoughts turn to self harm, in the US call or text 988, text HOME to 741741, or call 911 in an emergency.

Notes: _____

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Free printable from Lotus & Tulip · lotustulip.com/rumination-worksheet.html

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