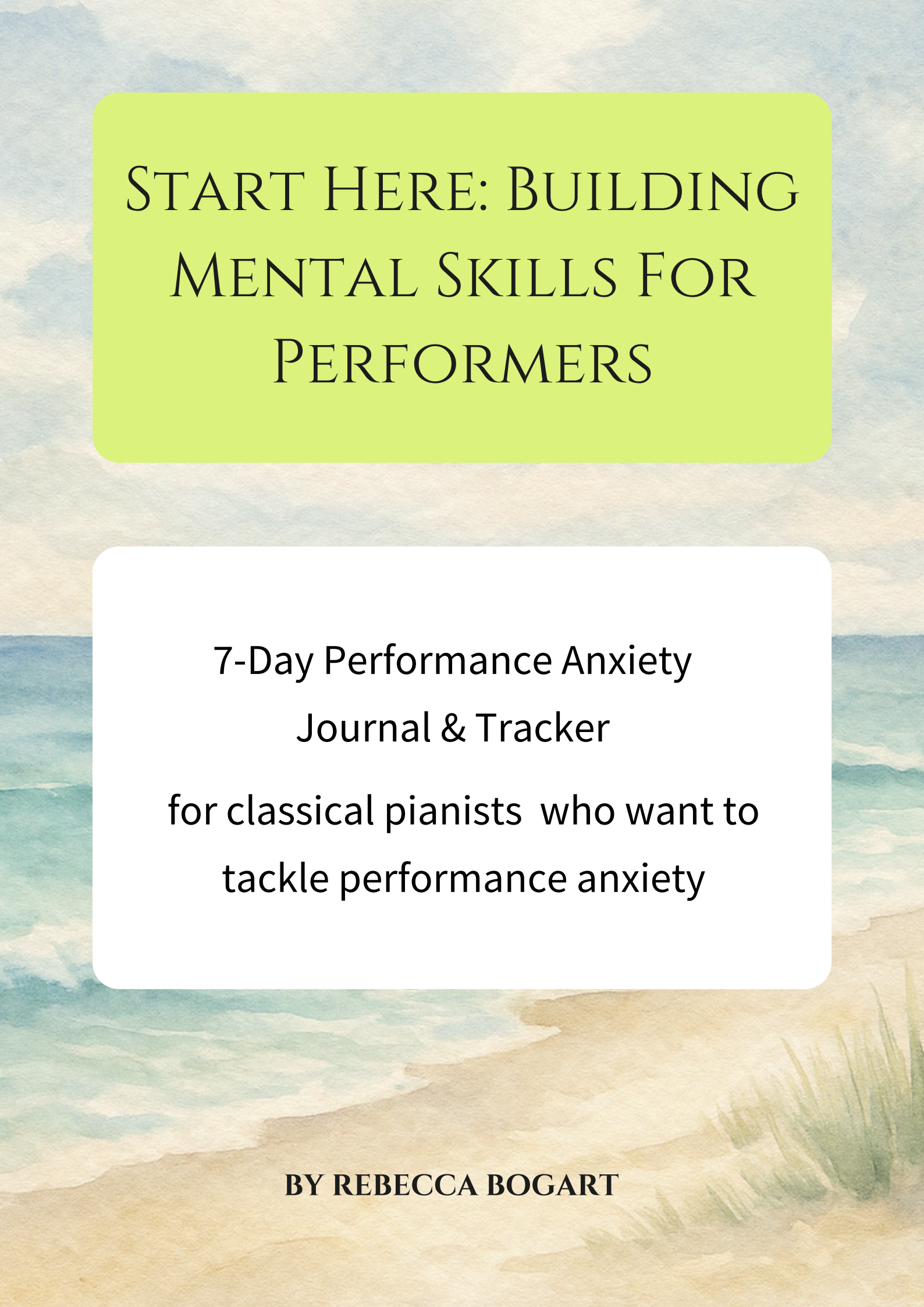




START HERE: BUILDING MENTAL SKILLS FOR PERFORMERS

7-Day Performance Anxiety
Journal & Tracker

for classical pianists who want to
tackle performance anxiety

BY REBECCA BOGART

How to use this journal...



Feeling anxious about performing? You're not alone.

You work hard, but when it's time to play in front of others, the nerves take over.

Maybe your hands shake. Your memory slips. You can't express what you practiced so carefully.

This journal will help you start changing that — one small step at a time.

You'll learn how to calm your body, refocus your mind, and reconnect with why you play piano in the first place.

Let's get started.

Welcome.



I'm so glad you're here. Performance anxiety doesn't mean you're broken — it just means you're human.

This journal is the beginning of a kinder, more confident way to approach your playing.

You're not alone. I'm right here with you.

The world needs more beauty. Be brave and share yours.

About the author

Rebecca Bogart



I help adult pianists train their brains and bodies so they can feel calm, play beautifully, and enjoy performing — even if they've struggled with tension, anxiety, or self-doubt for years.

With nearly 50 years of experience, I've helped thousands of pianists play with more ease, confidence, and artistry — through my YouTube channel, online community, and private teaching.

DAY 1



Date:

Morning Writing Prompt

Why Do You Play?

Write about the deeper reason you play the piano. What does it mean to you? How do you feel when you're most connected to the music?

Anxiety Management Practice

Full-Body Breathing

Breathe in a way that lets your lungs truly inflate. You might feel your ribs expand, your torso widen, even your arms shift slightly.

Some people like to call this belly breathing — and that's fine — but what matters most is that you're letting your whole upper body move with the breath.

Say: 'Body, it's safe. Time to relax.' Repeat for 1–2 minutes.

DAY 1



Date:

Daily Intention

Name Your Musical Why

Keep your reason for playing in mind throughout today's practice.
Let it guide how you show up at the piano.

Evening Reflection

Remember the Why

Did anything today reconnect you with the reason you play? What helped? What got in the way?

DAY 2



Date:

Morning Writing Prompt

What Do You Say to Yourself While Practicing?

Reflect on any recent practice session. What did you say to yourself — out loud or internally? Were the thoughts critical, encouraging, anxious, or focused? What patterns do you notice?

Anxiety Management Practice

Fist Squeeze Exercise

Inhale and squeeze your fists. Exhale and release. Repeat this 10 times, staying focused on the feeling of breath and muscle release.

DAY 2



Date:

Daily Intention

Choose 3 Reset Words

Pick three words that describe how you want to feel while playing — like calm, grounded, steady, curious, or free. Avoid words about outcomes or how others might see you. These words are just for you. When you feel anxious, pause and breathe slowly as you repeat them. Let them guide you back to your center.

Evening Reflection

Revisit and Recommit

Think back on your practice or playing today. When you felt anxious or distracted, did you remember your three words? Did they help shift how you felt — even a little? If not, what might help you use them next time? (screenshot on your phone, post it note, alarm labeled with your three words etc)

DAY 3



Date:

Morning Writing Prompt

What's One Critical Thought You Often Have While Playing?

Look back at your journal from yesterday. Choose 2–3 negative thoughts you have, then rewrite each one as something supportive and realistic.

Example:

Original thought: “I always mess this up.”

Reframe: “This part is tricky, but I’ve improved before — I can again.”

Anxiety Management Practice

Three-Minute Breathing Space

Take 3 minutes to breathe. You could try the full body breathing from Day 1, or try to focus on your breath in and out. Thoughts will come up, ignore them. Describe your mental and physical state before and after.

DAY 3



Date:

Daily Intention

Notice and Adjust How You Feel Today

Throughout the day, check in with your body and mind. If you feel tight, jumpy, or restless — slow down and breathe.

If you feel heavy, sluggish, or foggy — stand up, move around, shake out your arms.

Notice how even a small shift can change your energy.

Evening Reflection

How Did Your Mental or Physical State Shift Today?

Looking back on the day: When you felt off — anxious, low-energy, tense, or distracted — did you try changing your state? What technique did you use (breathing, repeating your three words, walking, etc.)? Did your reframed thought from this morning come to mind? If so, what effect did it have?

Date:

Morning Writing Prompt

What Are You Afraid Will Happen?

Write down the worst thing you're afraid might happen during a performance. Now write out what you would do if that happened. Visualize yourself getting through it.

Anxiety Management Practice

The Redirection Line

When you notice your mind/body spiraling into anxiety or negative self talk, say: “That’s just my brain trying to protect me. But I’m safe now.” Gently return to the moment.

DAY 4



Date:

Daily Intention

One Brave Act

Choose one small, courageous action today — playing for someone, recording yourself, or naming a fear out loud.

Evening Reflection

Check Your Courage Meter

What scared you today? If you acted anyway, what helped you push through?

If you didn't, that's okay too — what held you back? Is there anything you would do differently in the future? Visualize yourself doing it.

DAY 5



Date:

Morning Writing Prompt

When Do You Feel Most Musical?

Think of a time you felt expressive, free, or connected to the music. Describe what was happening and how it felt.

Anxiety Management Practice

Walking Words

Walk a few steps (or in place), repeating your own three reset words — or choose a couple words from your morning reflection. Let their rhythm guide your body and calm your nervous system.

DAY 5



Date:

Daily Intention

Strength-Based Reframing

When something feels hard, name something you're doing well — even if it's small. Speak it out loud. Write your reframe here too.

Evening Reflection

Spotlight a Win

Write about one moment you were able to shift your focus — even briefly — from fear to musical expression. What helped? What held you back? Is there anything you would do differently in the future? Visualize yourself doing it.

DAY 6



Date:

Morning Writing Prompt ***Your Performance Toolkit***

Write about the deeper reason you play the piano. What does it mean to you? How do you feel when you're most connected to the music?

Anxiety Management Practice ***Centering Through the Senses***

Name 5 things you see, 4 you hear, 3 you feel. Then notice the breath in your ribs, chest, and belly for 3-5 full body breaths.

DAY 1



Date:

Daily Intention

Use Your Grounding Tools

Pick one grounding strategy from your list. Write it down and place it where you can see it during practice. When you feel unsettled, pause and try using it — even briefly. Notice what changes.

Evening Reflection

One Useful Shift

What helped shift your mood or focus today — even a little? What might you use again?

Morning Writing Prompt

Rewrite the Storyline

Future Visualization (Silent Rehearsal)

Close your eyes and imagine yourself performing. Feel your body calm and expressive. Hear the music in your mind. Picture yourself embodying your three reset words as you play.

DAY 7



Date:

Daily Intention

Embody Future You

Move and practice today like the pianist you want to become. Let their energy guide your session.

If that feels too hard right now, think of a musician who you admire. Try practicing as if you were them. Write down what you notice while doing this.

Evening Reflection

Look Back, Look Forward

What changed this week? What helped most? What do you want to carry into your next performance moment? Which of the anxiety management techniques was the most effective for you? Can you commit to doing it regularly?

PRACTICING CALM IS ITS OWN PRACTICE



Anxiety tools only work if you practice them — just like scales.

They need to become habits you can rely on. Don't wait until you're nervous to try them.

Set aside 2–5 minutes each day to use one calming practice outside of piano time. Breathe. Walk with your words. Try the three-minute breathing space.

The more your body learns to settle, the easier it will be to stay steady when it counts.

Write down the techniques that helped you most. Use the tracker below to stay consistent — your nervous system needs practice too.

Date:

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DAY 1



Date:

Daily Intention

Name Your Musical Why

Keep your reason for playing in mind throughout today's practice.
Let it guide how you show up at the piano.

Evening Reflection

Remember the Why

Did anything today reconnect you with the reason you play? What helped? What got in the way?

RESOURCES



[BulletproofMusician.com](https://bulletproofmusician.com)

Dr. Noa Kageyama's site has a blog, and several excellent courses. Dr. Kageyama focuses in a lot of detail on how to manage the psychology of performing and practicing.

[DrJonSkidmore.com](https://drjonskidmore.com)

Dr. Skidmore's site offers some free anti-anxiety exercises. His book *Conquer Anxiety* is also excellent. His work focuses more on a larger mindset shift to help you combat anxiety.

[Fight Your Fear and Win: 7 Skills for Performing Your Best Under Pressure](#)

Dr. Don Greene teaches high-performance techniques from sports psychology to help performers master anxiety under pressure.



WHAT'S YOUR NEXT STEP?

You don't have to keep doing this alone.

It's time to find your people and get real support.

I want structure and community.

Join Piano with Rebecca B

- ✓ Monthly practice challenges
- ✓ Live performance workshops
- ✓ Live Q&As
- ✓ A community of pianists who get what you're going through

JOIN THE COMMUNITY

I want personal help.

Get one-on-one support with

- ✓ repertoire
- ✓ technique
- ✓ interpretation

Your first session is 50% off.

BOOK A LESSON

