

Limerence is the obsessive form of falling in love: a mind that won't stop revolving around a particular other person, even when it hurts.

What this is about:

- 50 concrete, immediately actionable steps to get out of it,
- with tailored adaptations for ADHD, autism and AuDHD,
- all designed for you to follow along and tick off as you go.

The 60-second self-assessment

The more points that apply, the more likely it is to be limerence rather than just a passing infatuation:

- The other person is almost constantly on your mind. In the morning, whilst scrolling, as you drift off to sleep.
- Your mood swings with every 'like', every message, every missed sign.
- You imagine scenarios that have little to do with the other person's actual behaviour.
- You ignore warning signs because the fantasy is too good to give up.
- You find it extremely difficult to let go, even though it would help you.
- Your studies, work or sleep are noticeably suffering.

How to make the most of the 50 ways

Don't try to tackle all 50 at once. Choose three steps that are achievable today and combine them into a small routine. Neurotypical brains often manage with one or two tools, whilst neurodivergent people usually need several at the same time. Make a note of what works and make the most of it.

Name it and create clarity

1. **Call things by their proper name.** Say out loud: 'This is limerence.' Naming a feeling has been shown to reduce its intensity and create some distance. You are experiencing limerence; you are not limerence.
2. **Separate the other person from your fantasy. Make** two columns: on the left, 'What the other person actually did'; on the right, 'What I imagine'. The gap between them is your limerence.
3. **Keep a limerence log.** Every day, note down the date, the trigger, the intensity on a scale of 0 to 10, and what helped. This makes your progress visible.

4. **Identify the need underlying the longing.** Closeness, feeling seen, security, validation. Pinpoint what you're actually craving.
5. **Write down the consequences.** What has your limerence cost you this week – in terms of time, sleep, focus and self-esteem?
6. **Set a realistic goal.** 'Reducing the intensity and regaining my everyday life' is achievable. A goal like 'never thinking about the other person again' will only put you under pressure.
7. **Understand your attachment style:** anxious, avoidant or disorganised. Your pattern explains a lot. Read more in the article '[Partner Choice and Attachment Style](#)'.
8. **Allow yourself to feel the pain.** Don't judge yourself for feeling hurt. Self-judgement fuels the vicious circle.
9. **Examine your idealisation.** Ask yourself: "Am I idealising right now? Which three real characteristics don't fit the picture?"
10. **Rewrite your version of the story.** A sentence that might help you: 'I am learning to redirect my attention.'

Managing contact and your environment

Overcoming any addiction requires avoiding triggers, or at least reducing exposure to them in a controlled way. For limerence, this means actively limiting the triggers in your environment.

11. **Limit contact with a gradually decreasing cap.** Set a limit on how often per day you check their profile or message them, and reduce this number each week.
12. **Mute or block.** Unfollowing and muting are often enough. If necessary, block them completely. The article '[No Contact](#)' explains why this is a legitimate approach.
13. **Archive your chat history.** Put it out of sight so you don't end up scrolling through it at night.
14. **Trigger box.** Put photos, gifts and shared playlists in a box, out of sight.
15. **App and website blockers.** Set limits for each other's profiles.
16. **Change your routines.** Avoid routes and events that make 'chance' encounters likely.
17. **Accountability partner.** Tell a trusted friend that you're currently working on overcoming your infatuation.

18. **Agree on a code word.** A word you'll send to a friend when the pull gets too strong.
19. **Keep communication to a minimum during unavoidable contact.** When studying, working or co-parenting, remain matter-of-fact and brief, setting clear boundaries.
20. **No mobile phones in the bedroom.** This simply makes checking your phone at night more of a faff.

Breaking the urge to check

The urge to check comes in waves. You don't have to suppress it; you can ride it out until it subsides of its own accord.

21. **Urge surfing.** When the urge strikes, set a timer for ten minutes and observe the wave without acting on it. It rises, peaks and subsides.
22. **Grounding with 5-4-3-2-1.** When you feel overwhelmed, name five things you can see, four you can hear, and three you can feel. A more detailed version is in the 5-4-3-2-1 exercise.
23. **Body Break with an external trigger.** Not just any movement, but a physical interruption of the loop: stand up and leave the room, splash cold water on your face or wrists, do five squats, speak out loud, snap a rubber band as a one-off tactile stimulus, walk briskly for ten minutes. An intense sensory stimulus, not a punishment. The trigger is crucial, not the exercise itself: an alarm clock out of reach, someone in the same room, an appointment that's happening anyway. Caught up in the cycle, nobody realises they're caught up in it.
24. **Cyclic Sighing.** Breathe in through your nose, then take a second, deeper breath to fill your lungs completely. Breathe out through your mouth with pursed lips, as if through a straw. This calms the nervous system for about five minutes.
25. **Thought session.** Consciously set aside a fixed 15-minute slot in the evening for brooding. You'll find techniques for this in the article 'Stopping rumination loops'.
26. **If-then rule.** 'If I want to open my profile, then I'll write three lines in my logbook first.'
27. **Substitute activity.** Swap checking your phone for something just as quick: drink some water, text a friend, step outside for a moment.
28. **Name the emotion.** "I'm feeling a sense of longing." Labelling emotions helps regulate them; read more in the article 'Emotion Regulation According to James Gross'.
29. **Reduce the 'reward lottery'.** Recognise the 'slot machine' pattern as soon as you spot it, and name it to yourself.

30. Practise **self-compassion after relapses**. Talk to yourself as you would to a good friend. Being hard on yourself prolongs the cycle.

Demystifying the fantasy

The Daymare technique was developed by Bellamy himself and has not been tested in any guidelines. It specifically weakens the link between LO and reward. It is one tool amongst many and should be used with caution if shame is easily triggered.

31. **Basic Daymare technique**. Notice the daydream and consciously steer it towards a sobering conclusion.

32. **Gentle Daymare for RSD**. Instead of exposing yourself to ridicule, imagine the other person as simply ordinary: inconsistent, boring, incompatible. The aim is to demystify the situation without self-punishment.

33. **Reality-check question**. ‘How did the other person actually behave most recently? Not in my imagination.’

34. **Flip technique**. If a pleasant memory surfaces, add a real-life moment in which the other person hurt or confused you.

35. **Finish writing the fantasy**. Carry the daydream through to a mundane everyday scene. This works well for maladaptive daydreaming.

36. **Time travel**. Imagine how much space the other person will still occupy in two years’ time.

37. **No internal dialogue**. Cut short any imagined conversations early on; they’ll then lose their pull.

38. **Humour as a substitute for a loop**. An absurd, funny sentence as an internal substitute loop. This is particularly helpful when your mind is already going round in circles.

Redirect energy and build a life

Limerence is a high-energy state. The energy doesn’t disappear if you suppress it. It needs an outlet.

39. **Pursue a special interest**. Channel the intensity into a project: art, coding, sport, music. Neurodivergent people in particular have strong sources of inspiration here.

40. **Plan real-life social engagements**. Arrange to meet up with people you actually see in person.

41. **Meaning list**. Five things that are worthwhile. Display it somewhere visible.

42. **Prioritise your body.** Sleep, food and exercise stabilise the dopamine rollercoaster.
43. **Redirect anger at injustice.** Channel the energy from injustices you've experienced into bigger issues and creative pursuits.
44. **Unsent letter.** Write everything you want to say to the other person without posting it, and deliberately put the letter away. It serves as a closing ritual.
45. **Weekly limerence window.** A fixed time slot for feeling, with a clear closing ritual (a song, a small reward).
46. **Celebrate small victories.** Record every day you've gone without checking in your logbook.
47. **Create your own reward system.** Small, reliable pleasures that belong to you and no one else.
48. **Values compass.** Make one decision every day that aligns with your values, not with fantasy.
49. **Relapse plan.** Write down in advance the first three steps you'll take the next time you have a relapse.
50. **Seek support.** If you realise you can't manage on your own, therapy is a wise and powerful step.

Extra: Adjustments for ADHD

With ADHD, limerence is linked to dopamine-seeking behaviour, hyperfocus and rejection-sensitive dysphoria. Don't rely on spontaneous realisation. Instead, externalise the reminder.

- External anchors: mobile phone alarms with labels ('Back to the present'), Post-it notes on the mirror, website blockers. That way, you won't need to rely on willpower in the moment.
- If-then plans work particularly well for ADHD brains because they provide a clear, binary rule.
- Pre-formulate daymares: Write down the sober alternative scenario in advance so that you don't slip into self-deprecation whilst caught up in the moment.
- Make sure to schedule exercise: it reduces high tension and supports emotional regulation.
- Medication and ADHD-tailored behavioural therapy can reduce impulsivity and emotional outbursts to such an extent that the strategies above actually work.

Extra: Adaptations for autism

For people on the autism spectrum, limerence is intertwined with mental looping, internal echolalia and a heightened sense of justice. Work with the loop rather than trying to eliminate it.

- Replace the loop content: Swap the repetitive script for a neutral text, a mantra or some song lyrics that have a calming effect.
- Setting fixed, predictable times for communication, social media and daydreaming provides structure for the nervous system.
- Dealing with injustice: The unsent letter helps to bring ‘mixed signals’ to a moral conclusion without endless brooding.
- Sensory grounding: dimmed lighting, a weighted blanket, familiar sounds. This helps when limerence tips over into overstimulation.
- Autism-informed support recognises looping and withdrawal as adaptive strategies. The article ‘Autism and Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)’ explains the link to compulsive behaviour.

Extra: Adaptations for AuDHD

AuDHD is a unique combination with its own pitfalls: imagination is both a special interest and hyperfocus, and daymare images can trigger shame (RSD) and rage at injustice (HIS) simultaneously. ‘Just stopping’ can easily lead to a meltdown or shutdown.

- Stacked pattern interrupts: use an external signal plus music plus movement plus a sensory tool all at the same time.
- Scheduled limerence windows allow space for the urge to repeat without taking over the day.
- Use the energy of injustice as a resource and channel it into engagement or creative work.
- Co-regulation: involve trusted people as accountability and reassurance partners.
- Trauma-informed, neurodiversity-affirmative support takes masking and chronic invalidation seriously. Background information can be found in the article ‘Executive Functions in ADHD and Autism’.

Your 7-day start and 30-day programme

Start small. In the first week, lay the foundations; after that, stay on course and track your progress in the logbook.

- Use this table as a daily log (paper or a mobile phone will do):

Self-help has its limits. Seek support if limerence is significantly affecting your studies, work or daily life; if you feel the urge to cross boundaries (such as stalking or repeated unwanted attempts to make contact); or if you suspect underlying trauma, attachment disorders or an undiagnosed neurodiversity.

If you are having thoughts of self-harm or suicide, take this seriously and seek support immediately. In Germany, the telephone counselling service is available free of charge 24 hours a day on 0800 111 0 111 or 0800 111 0 222. In the event of immediate danger, dial the emergency number 112.

Key points in brief

- Limerence is an obsessive infatuation with addictive and compulsive dynamics. Letting go means gradually weakening the reward association with the LO.
- Don't tackle all 50 approaches at once: choose three, combine them into a routine, and track what works.
- Four key strategies underpin the plan: identifying and clarifying the issue, managing contact and environment, coping with the urge to seek out the object of desire, and demystifying the fantasy whilst redirecting energy.
- Neurodivergent brains require a whole range of measures: external anchors and 'if-then' plans for ADHD, working with the loop for autism, and stacked interrupts for AuDHD.
- Seek help if you're experiencing severe impairment, boundary violations or thoughts of crisis. That's a wise move.

Sources

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