

9 simple ways to manage anxiety

It's perfectly normal to feel anxious sometimes



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We all know what it's like to feel anxious. You might feel anxious about the things that could go wrong in your life, and what will happen if this is the case. Someone who worries or is anxious a lot tends to focus on the negative, and spends a lot of time thinking about things that could go wrong or might not happen.

The most extreme form of worry is called Generalized Anxiety Disorder and you can find more info on that here. Anxiety and worry is a normal part of life but if it is not managed properly it can take control of your life.

There are a number of ways that you can tackle worry or anxiety and we've listed some of them below.

1. Reduce the amount of time and effort that you put into worrying

Worrying is a negative thing and only makes things much worse. How often have you spent time worrying about something only for it not to happen? Try to remember that worrying is pointless and just wastes valuable time that you could spend thinking on something else.

Practical tip: Take 15 minutes to write down everything you are worrying about. Not only will they seem so much less scary once they're on a page, you'll have devoted time to them, and so won't have them floating around in your

head as much afterwards. For every worry you have try to write down something that has gone well for you that day.

2. Try not to panic

Some people worry about worrying. Although this is unpleasant and wastes a lot of time, it isn't actually dangerous, so don't stress. Worrying is perfectly normal and is a part of everyday life, so try not to make it more than that.

3. Don't fight your worries

This might sound like a strange one but fighting your worries only makes them worse. Some people find that it helps to acknowledge the worry that comes into their mind and to let it go. This allows you to not give any power to the worry. This may be difficult at first but with practice it can really help.

4. Deep breathing

Feeling like you can't catch your breath is one of the most common of all panic symptoms. Shallow breathing means that the lowest part of the lungs doesn't get a full share of oxygen. That can make you feel short of breath and anxious. One way to prevent this is to practice something called belly breathing which can really help anxiety. This type of breathing takes a lot of practice as many of us breathe into our chest when we're anxious instead of into our stomach.

5. Focus on problem solving

This is a practical and useful thing to do that can remove a lot of stress associated with worrying. This takes a bit of practice so don't give up too soon.

- Grab a pen and paper and write down the problem as specifically as you can.
- Take some time to think of all the solutions to the problem.
- Look at the pros and cons of each solution.
- Choose the solution that is best and implement it.

- After implementing it, see how it worked. If the outcome wasn't successful, simply move onto the next solution.

6. Exercise

Regular exercise will help you deal with stress by allowing you to release tension. Exercise also causes the brain to release serotonin which is a hormone that can improve your mood. Exercise is more than team sports or going to the gym. Find something that works for you, Dancing, swimming, zumba classes or something that will get you up and active.

7. Diet

What you eat or drink can really impact on your mood and how you feel. Try to eat foods that are healthy and nutritious. Avoid caffeine and energy drinks as they can actually make you more anxious. Also be aware of the sugar crash that happens after eating sugary foods.

8. Smoking, drinking or taking drugs

Smoking and drinking alcohol can often make anxiety feel worse than it is. You might drink, smoke or take drugs more when you are stressed and use it as a coping mechanism. But it is in fact making it worse in the long run.. To combat this, limit the amount of alcohol that you drink and try to cut back on the amount of cigarettes that you smoke. The same goes for using drugs such as cannabis, Ecstasy and MDMA.

9. Accept that life is often uncertain

Worrying may be very familiar to you and may appear to be helpful at first as it seems like it is helping you prepare for things in advance. However, this is far from the truth. Worrying is a waste of your time and is unhelpful. Life is unpredictable and no matter how often you worry, you can never really know what will happen in the future. Focusing on the present and what you can do is much more useful. Once you accept this you will be able to escape from the power that worry has over you.