

9 Healthy Tips to Help Cope With Anxiety

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If you struggle with anxiety on a daily basis, you may find yourself using unhealthy methods, such as drug or alcohol abuse, to cope with it.

For obvious reasons, this is not the best approach, but what is?

Consider these strategies:

- 1. Deep breathing exercises.** Many of us use our chests to breathe rather than the diaphragm, which is a large muscle found in your abdomen. **When you breathe in, your stomach should expand and then contract when you breathe out.**
 - Breathing with only your chest will cause you to have short and shallow breaths that can cause increased stress and anxiety.
- 2. Progressive muscle relaxation.** This technique involves tensing your muscles and then relaxing them one at a time. When you do this you're teaching your muscles that when you're stressed, which often causes muscle tension, that you need to relax.
- 3. Mindfulness.** This is a common technique to reduce anxiety. With mindfulness, **you put your full attention on what you're doing in that moment.** You notice the sights, sounds, and smells around you. When your full focus is on the present moment, there isn't room for feelings of anxiety.
- 4. Self-monitoring.** What triggers your anxiety? **It may be that certain people, events, or situations cause you to feel anxious.** Once you figure out your triggers, you may be able to do something to prevent the oncoming anxiety.

5. Get support from others. It has been found time and time again that support from friends and family is incredibly important when dealing with anxiety. Having someone you trust that you can talk to can be helpful.

- There are also therapists and various groups available full of like-minded people dealing with similar issues who may be able to help too.

6. Self-soothing strategies. While support from others is beneficial, sometimes you may find yourself alone. One self-soothing technique involves being positive and telling yourself that everything will be okay and that you can handle the situation.

- It's important that you don't allow any negative thoughts into your mind while performing this strategy.

7. Write down your thoughts and feelings. Rather than keeping how you feel inside to fester, it would be better for you to get these thoughts out of your mind and onto paper.

8. Distraction techniques. Sometimes focusing on your emotions can make them even stronger and leave you feeling more out of control of the situation. By using distraction, you're taking your mind off your emotions, making them easier to manage.

- You can do anything you want to distract yourself. A walk is commonly used as a distraction. So are puzzles.

9. Work towards a goal. Achieving a goal can be motivating and can help reduce both depression and anxiety.

- Try using a technique called behavioral activation. **Each time that you feel anxious, engage your mind in a positive and rewarding activity, such as working toward a goal.**

These strategies can each help you to cope with anxiety. Some may work better for you than others. Some may work better in different situations. And some may not work for you. **The key is to practice them and then try them out in anxious situations** to see which ones work best for you.