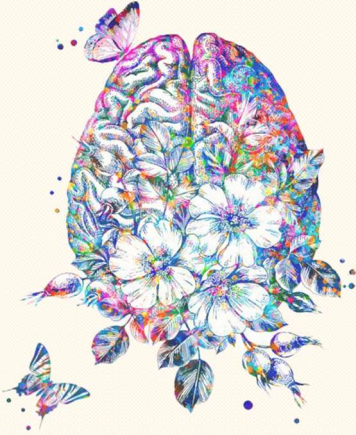


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Understanding Anxiety Attacks: A Quick Guide

What Does an Anxiety Attack Feel Like? Anxiety can be overwhelming and frightening. Symptoms may include a rapid heartbeat, shortness of breath, trembling, sweating, and a feeling of dread. Some people may experience a sense of losing control or feeling detached from reality.

Is it an Anxiety Attack or a Panic Attack? While they share similar symptoms and causes, they differ in how they manifest and their duration. **Anxiety Attack:** Gradually builds in response to stressors and subsides when the stressor is gone. **Panic Attack:** Often arrives suddenly, with or without a trigger, and ramps up very quickly. Typically lasts less than an hour.

Helpful Coping Skills "On the Go":

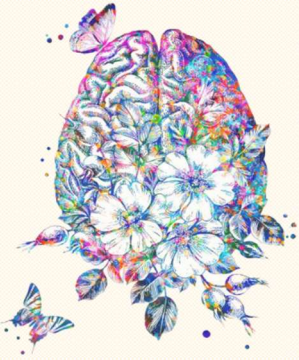
- **Breathing Techniques:** Deep breathing exercises like square breathing [Box Breathing Training](#) Box breathing is GREAT here is an awesome practice video to guide you after you do the training. There is no sound, so it is great as a guide in a public place. [Box breathing exercise \(9-MIN\)](#)
- **Progressive Muscle Relaxation:** Tense and relax different muscle groups. Here is a practice you can do (the more you do it the easier it is WITHOUT the guide). [Progressive Muscle Relaxation \(9-MIN\)](#) or [3-MIN Stress Reduction Practice](#)
- **Visualization:** Picture yourself in a peaceful setting using Safe Place Visualization. Here is a guided exercise to try out: [Leaves on a Stream \(7-MIN\)](#)
- **Water:** Splash cold water on your face.
- **Grounding Techniques:** Use the 5-4-3-2-1 rule to connect with your senses and the present moment. [5, 4, 3, 2, 1: Practice \(35 seconds\)](#) or the 3-3-3 Rule [3-3-3 Rule \(3MIN\)](#)
- **Listen to Music or Soothing Sounds:** Create a playlist of calming music or use soundscapes.
- **Physical Activity:** Take a walk or engage in gentle movement to shift your mental state.
- **Talking to Someone:** Reach out to a trusted friend or family member to share your feelings.
- **Avoiding Stimulants:** Stay away from caffeine and alcohol during an anxiety attack.
- **Distraction:** Activities that shift your focus away from anxiety, like reading or watching videos.

BECOME YOUR OWN GUIDE WITH PRACTICE!!

I have given you some links for training videos. **REMEMBER:** It is just as important to train when you are NOT anxious as it is when you are anxious. Doing at least one or two guided mindfulness practices every day allows you to become an expert at doing it in locations and settings that you cannot use your video guides in.

Preparing for Different Environments: Before entering a new environment or potentially stressful situation (work, school, meeting, etc.), it's helpful to conduct a quick body scan practice to assess your current state. This involves taking a moment to check in with yourself and gauge whether you're already nearing the anxious zone. Pay attention to any physical sensations, such as muscle tension, shallow breathing, or increased heart rate. Utilize the Body Scan Practice [BODY SCAN \(9-MIN\)](#)

Finding Your Warning Signs: Identifying warning signs that indicate you might be heading towards an anxiety attack is crucial for proactive management. These signs can vary from person to person but may include racing thoughts, irritability, restlessness, or changes in appetite. By recognizing these early signals, you can start utilizing your coping toolbox before the attack escalates.



Anxiety Triggers Assessment Sheet

Instructions: Please take some time to reflect on situations, thoughts, or experiences that tend to trigger your anxiety. Be as specific and detailed as possible. Understanding your triggers is an important step in managing your anxiety effectively.

Triggers Checklist: Please check the boxes next to any triggers that commonly provoke anxiety for you:

- Social situations (parties, meetings, gatherings)
- Work or academic stress
- Financial concerns
- Health-related issues
- Conflict or arguments with others
- Change or uncertainty
- Crowded or enclosed spaces
- Public speaking or performance situations
- Traveling (to new places)
- Loss or grief
- Relationship problems
- Past traumatic experiences
- News or media exposure
- Deadline pressures
- Perfectionism or fear of failure
- Feeling overwhelmed or out of control
- Physical symptoms (fatigue, pain, illness)
- Driving (traffic, city, rural)
- Flying or Going to Airport
- Other (please specify): _____

Use the white space in this to add MORE. Write sideways, upside down!

STOP use your coping skills DON'T WAIT:

OK now, we all know it's not as easy as just saying "STOP" to make anxiety or distress disappear. But how can we use the stop method effectively? Well, it's not rocket science. With the checklist above, you've identified the areas where you often feel distressed. This means that before you even enter these situations, you've probably already worked yourself up about how tough it might be or imagined different things that could happen.

USE YOUR COPING SKILLS. Don't wait until you're in the thick of it all to try and calm down. Take a moment in the parking lot or the first bathroom inside to use your coping skills – STOP and use your coping skills. DON'T WAIT. Or if you know that driving in traffic stresses you out, STOP before starting your car and use your coping skills. You deserve to give yourself 10 minutes to ground yourself. It might not stop every anxiety or panic attack or completely get rid of your distress, but what harm will it do? And how might it help, maybe not today, but tomorrow!

PERSONAL COPING SKILLS



Instructions: Please use this worksheet to list coping skills that you find helpful in managing your anxiety. Coping skills can be activities, techniques, or strategies that help you feel calmer and more in control when you're experiencing anxiety. Fill in the blanks with coping skills that work best for you.

My Personal Coping Skills:

1. Coping Skill #1: _____
 - Description/Instructions: _____
2. Coping Skill #2 _____
 - Description/Instructions: _____
3. Coping Skill #3: _____
 - Description/Instructions: _____
4. Coping Skill #4: _____
 - Description/Instructions: _____
5. Coping Skill #5: _____
 - Description/Instructions: _____
6. Coping Skill #6: _____
 - Description/Instructions: _____
7. Coping Skill #7: _____
 - Description/Instructions: _____
8. Coping Skill #8: _____
 - Description/Instructions: _____
9. Coping Skill #9: _____
 - Description/Instructions: _____
10. Coping Skill #10: _____
 - Description/Instructions: _____

STOP and SMELL THE ROSES:

STOP! Recognizing even the small things that help you calm down is incredibly important. Just like we stop to smell the roses and appreciate their beauty, we should also take the time to notice the little things that bring us peace and comfort.

So, how can we effectively use the STOP method to acknowledge these calming moments? It's as easy as being mindful and observant of what makes you feel better. Maybe it's a warm cup of tea, a favorite song, or a comforting hug from a loved one. These small gestures may seem insignificant, but they can have a big impact on our well-being.

STOP and notice these moments of calmness, no matter how fleeting they may seem. Don't overlook them. Take a moment to appreciate and embrace them. It could be as simple as taking a deep breath and savoring the moment. By acknowledging these small joys, you're giving yourself the gift of self-care and resilience.



HOW TO USE / CREATE YOUR COPING SKILLS LIST

Remember, everyone is different, so it's important to experiment and find coping skills that work best for you.

1. **Review the List:** Take some time to read through the list provided below.
2. **Identify Relevant Coping Skills:** Consider which coping skills resonate most with you and seem like they would be helpful in managing your anxiety. You may find that certain techniques appeal to you more than others.
3. **Experiment and Explore:** Don't be afraid to experiment with different coping skills to see what works best for you. Keep an open mind and be willing to try new approaches, even if they seem unfamiliar at first.
4. **Customize Your Toolkit:** Personalize your coping skills toolkit by selecting a variety of techniques that address different aspects of your anxiety. Choose a mix of small, everyday practices and larger, more structured activities to have a well-rounded approach to managing stress.
5. **Practice Regularly:** Incorporate your chosen coping skills into your daily routine. Make an effort to practice them regularly, whether you're feeling anxious or not, to build familiarity and effectiveness over time.
6. **Adapt as Needed:** Be flexible and willing to adapt your coping skills as your needs and circumstances change. What works for you today may not work as well tomorrow, so stay attuned to your experiences and be open to adjusting your approach accordingly.
7. **Seek Support if Needed:** If you're struggling to find coping skills that work for you or if you're experiencing significant distress, don't hesitate to reach out for support. Talk to a therapist or trusted friend or family member who can provide guidance and assistance.
8. **Stay Patient and Persistent:** Remember that managing anxiety is a journey, and finding effective coping skills may take time and experimentation. Stay patient with yourself and remain persistent in your efforts to develop a toolkit of strategies that support your well-being.