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Reducing Anxiety Symptoms Right Now

1. Take a deep breath

Deep breathing activates the body's relaxation response. Try slowly inhaling to a count of 4, filling your belly first and then your chest, gently holding your breath to a count of 4, and slowly exhaling to a count of 4. Repeat several times.

2. Accept that you're anxious

Anxiety is just a feeling, like any other feeling. Accepting that is critical because trying to fight anxiety often worsens it. Accepting your anxiety doesn't mean liking it or resigning yourself to a miserable existence. It just means you are accepting reality as it is — and in that moment, reality includes anxiety.

3. Your brain is playing tricks on you

A person's brain can make them believe they're dying of a heart attack when they're actually having a panic attack. Gently and calmly remind yourself that this will pass and that your brain is playing tricks on you.

4. Question your thoughts

Ask yourself these questions: "Is this likely to happen? If the worst happens, what would be so bad about that? Could I handle that? If something bad happens, what might that mean about me? Is this really true or does it just seem that way?"

5. Use a calming visualization

Picture yourself on a river bank or outside in a favorite park, field or beach. Watch leaves pass by on the river or clouds pass by in the sky. Assign [your] emotions, thoughts and sensations to the clouds and leaves, and just watch them float by.

6. Observe: Do not judge

Practice observing (thoughts, feelings, emotions, sensations, judgment) with compassion and without judgment.

7. Use positive self-talk

Anxiety can produce a lot of negative chatter. Instead, tell yourself positive coping statements. For instance, you might say, "this anxiety feels bad, but I can manage it."

8. Focus on right now

When people are anxious, they are usually obsessing about something that might occur in the future. Even if something serious is happening, focusing on the present moment will improve your ability to manage the situation.

9. Focus on meaningful activities

When you're feeling anxious, it's also helpful to focus your attention on a meaningful activity. Ask yourself what you'd do if you *weren't* anxious. If you were going to see a movie, still go. If you were going to do the laundry, still do it.

Modified from: <https://psychcentral.com/lib/9-ways-to-reduce-anxiety-right-here-right-now/>

HOW TO USE YOUR EAP:

ERC is your company's Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

For additional information, visit our website www.ERCincorp.com or simply call 1-800-222-8590.