

Top Ten Tips for Anxiety Relief

Managing anxiety can be tough. We're hard-wired for it because its job - to warn us of danger, and to keep us out of it - is nothing less than survival. Think of a fire alarm that goes off on its own, ringing when there's no fire. It can eventually make you feel as though you're at its mercy.

In order to reduce or manage your anxiety, consider two main areas – your body and your thoughts.

Help for your Body

1. Breathe deeply - take a long inhale, hold it, let it out slowly. Do this 2 or 3 times. You want a long slow exhale. This helps to activate the part of your nervous system that calms you down (parasympathetic**).
2. Reduce or eliminate alcohol and caffeine – coffee, energy drinks, sodas.
3. Exercise, move your body, regularly. I also recommend restorative yoga for its effect on the parasympathetic nervous system.
4. Sit and “ground” into what you are sitting on --- notice and feel how your back is supported by the couch or chair, notice how your seat is supported, how your legs are supported. Just notice your breath – in and out.
5. Get enough sleep with a regular and consistent sleep schedule.

Help for your Thinking

6. Learn to notice and watch your thoughts while focusing on your breath. Our thoughts will often feed the anxiety - it's like throwing wood on a fire. Work at just noticing your thoughts, not getting attached in any way. They're just thoughts and not necessarily facts
7. Identify and name what is happening. Tell yourself you are experiencing anxiety – whether anxious feelings or anxious thoughts. It can be terribly uncomfortable but remember that thoughts and feelings can't hurt you.
8. Change the story of your thoughts. When anxious thoughts weave a theme of catastrophe, change the story to something realistic.
9. Learn to ignore anxious thoughts about the future. They usually get blown way out of proportion. Always try to mindfully focus on the present.
10. Every day try to spend some time away from your screens (tv, phone, desktop, ipad...). Get the news in small doses if you really feel the need to know.

Don't fight your symptoms. The more you fight them, the worse it gets!

**Some people need a bit of coaching on how to effectively use the breath.