

**17. Strike a power pose.** Anxiety makes you want to physically shrink. However, research has shown that holding a powerful pose for just two minutes can boost feelings of self-confidence and power. Pose like your favorite superhero, with your hands on hips, ready for battle, or strike a pose like a boss leaning over a table to drive a point home, hands planted on the table top.



**18. Sweat it out.** Exercise releases endorphins, the feel-good chemicals in our bodies. Exercise that is more intense than your normal physical activity level can actually reduce your body's physical response to anxiety.

**19. Fall into Child's Pose.** Assume the Child's Pose, a pose in yoga that is done by kneeling on the floor and bringing the body to rest on the knees in the fetal position. The arms are either brought to the sides of the legs or stretched out over the head, palms on the floor.

**20. Do a tech detox.** Studies show that modern technology is adversely correlated to sleep and stress—especially in young adults. Challenge yourself to spend a week without video game systems or smartphones, and encourage yourself to be more creative.



**21. Walk in nature.** A Stanford study showed that exposure to green spaces has a positive cognitive effect on individuals. Going for a walk in nature allows you to reconnect with tangible, physical objects; calms your mind; and helps your logical brain to take over anxious brain.

#### Befriend water

**22. Drink more water.** Although dehydration rarely causes anxiety on its own, because our brains are 85% water, it can certainly make its symptoms worse. Make sure you are getting adequate amounts of water in a day. The basic rule of thumb is to drink one-half to one ounce of water per pound of body weight.

**23. Take a cold or hot bath.** Hydrotherapy has been used for centuries in natural medicine to promote health and prevent disease. Just 10 minutes in a warm or cool bath can have profound effects on the levels of anxiety you are experiencing.

#### Practice mindfulness

**24. Observe your "train of thoughts."** Imagine your anxious thoughts are like trains coming into a busy station. Sometimes they will slow down and pass by, and at other times they will stop at the station for a while. If the anxious thought stops at the station, practice breathing slowly and deeply until the train pulls out of the station. As it fades, "watch" as the train pulls away. This exercise teaches you that you don't have to react to every thought that occurs to you. Some thoughts you can simply acknowledge and allow to leave without acting on them.

**25. Practice a five-by-five meditation.** Use each of your five senses to name five things you experience with that sense. Again, this exercise roots you in things that are actually happening rather than in things that *may* happen or *could* happen that are causing you to worry.

**26. Focus on your breath.** The natural biological response to anxiety is to breathe shallowly and quickly. Focusing on breathing slowly and deeply will mitigate many of the body's stress responses.

**27. Tune in with a body scan.** Close your eyes and check in with all of the parts of your body. Talk to each part and ask how it feels and if there is anything wrong. Then invite it to relax while you check in with the other parts.

**28. Practice cognitive defusion.** The process of cognitive defusion separates the reaction you are having from the event. It gives you a chance to think about the stressor separately from your reaction to that stressor. Talk about your feelings of anxiety as though your mind is a separate person. You might say something like "My mind does not want to go to the party, so it is making my stomach hurt." By disconnecting the two, you can then talk to your mind as though it is a person and re-create your internal dialogue.

#### Listen

**29. Listen to music.** Crank up the tunes and sing along!

**30. Listen to stories.** Avid readers know how difficult it is to pry themselves away from a good book. Listening to audio books can help you get lost in an imaginary world where anxiety and worry do not exist or are put into their proper perspective.

**31. Listen to guided meditations.** Guided meditations are designed to be soothing to you and help you relax by presenting images for your mind's eye to focus on rather than focusing on the stressor.

**32. Listen to the uplifting words of another.** Often, anxiety is rooted in a negative internal monologue. Listen to uplifting words or those of someone else to restructure that monologue into positive affirmations of yourself.

#### Help someone else

**33. Volunteer.** Researchers have long shown that "helper's high" happens when people volunteer to help others without any expectation of compensation. Volunteering is an easy way to alleviate his feelings of stress or anxiety.



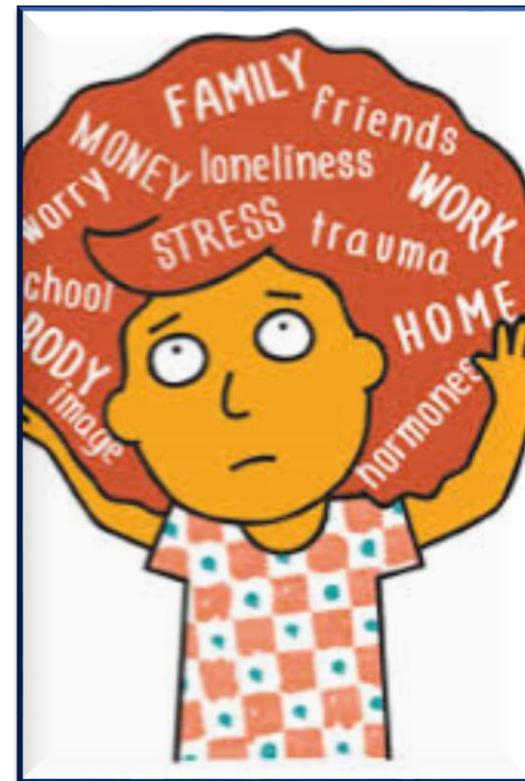
**34. Be a friend and give someone else advice.** Sometimes the advice we give others is really meant for ourselves.

**35. Turn your focus outward.** Anxiety would make you believe that you are the only one who has ever experienced worry or stress in a certain situation. In reality, many people are likely experiencing the same feelings of worry. Find someone who may look nervous and talk to her or him about how she or he is feeling. By discussing anxiety with peers, you will discover that you are *not* the only one to feel worry.

#### Embrace the worry

**36. Know that this too shall pass.** One of the greatest lies the anxious brain tells you is that you will feel anxious forever. Physiologically, it is impossible to maintain a high level of arousal for longer than several minutes. Sit, and read a story or simply watch the world go by until the feelings of anxiety start to fade away. It sounds simple, but acknowledging that the "fight or flight" response won't last forever gives it less power when you begin to feel its effects.

**37. Worrying is part of our humanity.** Anxiety, stress, and worry are all part of what makes us human. These biological and psychological responses are designed to keep us safe in situations we are not familiar with. Reassure yourself that there is nothing wrong with feeling anxiety, that it simply alerts your body so that it can be on the lookout for danger.



## Anxiety: 37 Techniques to Calm Yourself

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Reference: Jain, Renee. (2017, November 18).  
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**1. Write it out** and then throw it out. In a study published in Psychological Science, people were asked to write what they liked or disliked about their bodies. One group of people kept the paper and checked it for errors, whereas the other group of people physically discarded the paper their thoughts were written on. The physical act of discarding the paper helped them discard the thoughts mentally, too. Next time you are anxious, write your thoughts on a paper and then physically throw the paper out. Chances are, your perspective will begin to change as soon as the paper hits the trash can.

**2. Journal about worries.** Researchers at Harvard found that writing about a stressful event for 15 minutes, for four consecutive days, can lessen the anxiety a person feels about that event. Although the person may initially feel more anxiety about the stressor, eventually the effects of writing about anxious events relieved anxious symptoms for up to six months after the exercise. Make journaling about anxious thoughts a habit for you.

**3. Create “worry time.”** In the movie Gone with the Wind, Scarlett O’Hara often says, “I can’t think about that now. I’ll think about it tomorrow.” A similar concept works for anxious individuals. Set aside a designated “worry time” for 10-15 minutes on a daily basis. Choose the same time each day and the same spot and allow yourself to write down your worries without worrying about what actually constitutes a worry. When the time is up, drop the worries in a box, say goodbye to them, and move on to a new activity. When you begin to feel anxious, remind yourself that it isn’t “worry time” yet, but reassure yourself that there will be time to review your anxiety later.

**4. Write a letter to yourself.** Dr. Kristen Neff, a professor at the University of Texas, Austin, and a pioneer in the field of self-compassion, created an exercise where people were asked to write a letter as though they were not experiencing stress or anxiety but rather their best friends were. From this exercise they were able to examine themselves and their situation objectively and apply a level of compassion to themselves that they often reserve for other people. Next time you feel anxious, write a letter that begins “Dear Me” and then continue writing in the voice of your best friend (real or imaginary).

### Have a debate (with yourself)

**5. Talk to your worry.** Personification of a worry allows you to feel as though you have control over it. By giving anxiety a face and a name, the logical brain takes over and begins to place limitations on the stressor.

### 6. Recognize that thoughts are notoriously inaccurate.

Psychologist Aaron Beck developed a theory in behavioral therapy known as “cognitive distortions.” Simply put, these are messages our minds tell us that are simply untrue. When we recognize these distortions, we can begin to help break them down and replace them with truths. Read through and use this list as a reference.

- **Jumping to conclusions:** judging a situation based on assumptions as opposed to definitive facts
- **Mental filtering:** paying attention to the negative details in a situation while ignoring the positive

- **Magnifying:** magnifying negative aspects in a situation
- **Minimizing:** minimizing positive aspects in a situation
- **Personalizing:** assuming the blame for problems even when you are not primarily responsible
- **Externalizing:** pushing the blame for problems onto others even when you are primarily responsible
- **Overgeneralizing:** concluding that one bad incident will lead to a repeated pattern of defeat
- **Emotional reasoning:** assuming your negative emotions translate into reality, or confusing feelings with facts.



**7. Give yourself a hug.** Physical touch releases oxytocin, a feel-good hormone, and reduces the stress hormone cortisol in the bloodstream. The next time you feel anxious, stop and give yourself a warm hug. You can hug yourself discreetly by folding your arms and squeezing your body in a comforting way.



**8. Rub your ears.** For thousands of years, Chinese acupuncturists have used needles to stimulate various points in a person’s ears to treat stress and anxiety. Similar benefits are available to you simply by applying pressure to many of these same points. Begin by lightly tracing the outline of your outer ear several times. Then using gentle pressure, place your thumbs on the back of your ears and your forefingers on the front. Count to five and then move your finger and thumb downward to a point just below where they started. Repeat the process until you have-squeezed both earlobes for five seconds each.

**9. Hold your own hand.** Remember the safety you felt when you held your parent’s hand as you crossed the street? As it turns out, hand-holding has both psychological and physiological benefits. In one study, researchers found that hand-holding during surgery helped patients control their physical and mental symptoms of anxiety. Clasp both-hands together, fingers intertwined, until the feelings of anxiety begin to fade.

### Understand worry

**10. Understand the origin of worry.** Anxiety and worry have biological purposes in the human body. Once upon a time, anxiety was what kept our hunter and gatherer relatives safely alert while they searched for food. Even today, worry and anxiety keep us from making mistakes that will compromise our safety. Understand that worry and anxiety are common feelings and that you-get into trouble only when your brain sounds the alarm and you do not allow logical thoughts to calm yourself down.

**11. Learn about the physical symptoms of worry.** We often think of anxiety as a mental state. What we don’t think about is how worry creates physical symptoms as well. Cortisol and adrenaline, two of the body’s main stress hormones, are produced at a rapid rate when we experience anxiety.

These are the “fight or flight” hormones that prepare our bodies to either fight or run from something dangerous. Our heart rates increase, and our breathing gets fast and shallow; we sweat, and we may even experience nausea and diarrhea. However, once you are familiar with the physical symptoms of anxiety, you-can recognize them as anxiety and use any of the strategies in this article.

### Use your body

**12. Stretch.** A study published in the Journal of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics showed that children who practice yoga not only experience the uplifting benefits of exercise but also maintain those benefits long after they are done with their practice. Even if you are unfamiliar with yoga poses, the process of slow, methodical stretching can provide many of the same benefits.



### 13. Push against a wall.

For some, trying to breathe deeply or relax through meditation only causes more anxiety. “Am I doing this right? Everyone thinks I’m crazy. I forgot to breathe that time.” The act of physically tensing the muscles will create a counterbalancing release when they are relaxed, resulting in the relaxation more passive methods may not provide. Push against the wall with all of your might, taking great care to use the muscles in your arms, legs, back, and stomach to try to move the wall. Hold for a count of 10 and then breathe deeply for a count of 10, repeating three times.

**14. Practice chopping wood.** In yoga, the Wood Chopper Pose releases tension and stress in the muscles by simulating the hard labor of chopping wood. Stand tall with your legs wide and arms straight above as though you are holding an ax. Inhale and, with the full force of your body, swing the imaginary ax as though you are chopping wood and simultaneously exhale a “ha.” Repeat.

**15. Try progressive muscle relaxation.** This relaxation exercise includes two simple steps: (1) Systematically tense specific muscle groups, such as your head, neck, and shoulders etc., and then (2) Release the tension and notice how you feel when you release each muscle group. Practice by tensing the muscles in your face as tightly as you can and then release the tension.

**16. Use the Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT)**—EFT combines tapping acupressure points in the body with verbalizing positive affirmations. Using your fingertips, gently but firmly tap the top of your head, eyebrows, under your eyes, under your nose, chin, collarbone, and wrists while saying positive things about the situation. The idea is that the body’s natural electromagnetic energy is activated and associated with positive affirmations, thereby reducing anxiety.